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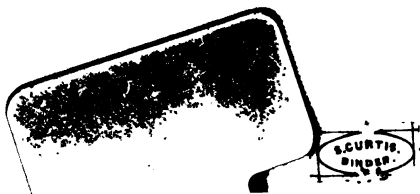
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INTRODUCTION.

IF ye mark it, your very Calendar, so as the wisdom of the Church hath contrived it, is a notable Catechism. And, surely, if the plain man would but ply his almanack well, that alone would teach him Gospel enough to show him the history of his Saviour. If one day teach another, all days would teach him. There would he see his blessed Saviour's conception annunciated by the angel, March 25. Forty weeks after that, he would see him born of the Virgin,—according to the Feast of the Nativity: eight days after that, circumcised,—on New Year's Day: then visited and adored by the sages,—in the Epiphany: then presented into the Temple,—on the day of Purification: then tempted and fasting forty days,—in Lent. He should see him ushered in by his forerunner, the holy Baptist,—six months before his Nativity: attended by his

twelve Apostles, in their several ranks; and Thomas the last, for his unbelief. And, at last, after infinite and beneficial miracles, he should see him making his Maundy with his disciples, on the Thursday; and crucified on Good Friday: on Easter Morning, God the Father raises up his Son Jesus from the dead¹; on Ascension Day, God the Son mounts up to heaven in glory²; on Whit-Sunday, God the Holy Ghost descends upon the Apostles³:—and his belief in all these, summed up in the celebration of the Blessed Trinity, the Sunday following.—*Sermon xxxi.*

¹ Acts v. 30.

² Acts i. 9.

³ Acts ii. 3, 4.

The First Sunday in Advent.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand : let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. . . . Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.—Romans xiii. 12. 14. (*Epistle.*)

NONE but the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God blessed for ever, can cover the soul, that it may not appear unrighteous,—or can cleanse the soul, that it may not be unrighteous : and cleansed it must be, ere the Lord Jesus can be put on ; we shall wrong his perfect holiness, if we think we can slip him on, as a case, over our filthy rags. It is with us, as with Joshua the High Priest : the filthy garments must first be taken off ; and then the Lord shall say unto us, *Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with a change of raiment*¹. We put on a garment, when we apply it all over our body : so as that part

¹ Zech. iii. 4.

which is clothed appears not, but is defended from the air, and from the eye. If we have truly put on the Lord Jesus, nothing of ours is seen, but Christ is all in all to us. Although this application goes yet deeper; for, we so put him on, that we not only put ourselves into him, but also put him into ourselves, by a mutual kind of spiritual incorporation. We put him on, then, upon our intellectual parts, by knowing him, by believing on him:—*This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*, saith our Saviour²; and as for faith, no grace doth so sensibly apprehend him, and make him so feelingly ours. We put him on upon our wills and affections, when we take pleasure in him; when we love him, delight in him, and prefer him to our chiefest joy. Thus do we put him on; as our Lord,—in our humble and dutiful subjection; as our Jesus,—in our faithful affiance; as Christ,—the anointed of God; to be our King in all holy obedience; our Priest, in our willing consecration to him; our Prophet, in our cheerful readiness to be instructed by him. How happy are we, if we be thus decked: we

² John xvii. 3.

adorn these poor carcases of ours gaily, with no small expense; and, when we have done, the stuff, or the fashion, or both, wears out to nothing: but there is a garment that will never be out of fashion: *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*³; yea, the same to us: here, we put him on in grace; there, in eternal glory. The Israelites were forty years in the wilderness; yet their shoes not worn, their apparel not impaired⁴; but this attire shall not only hold good in the time of our wandering in the desert, but after we are come into the Canaan of glory: and it is best at last. Wherefore do we put on our choicest attire on some high days, but to testify the cheerfulness of our hearts? *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white*, saith the Preacher⁵. Mephibosheth changed not his raiment, since David went out; as one that would have the sorrow of his heart seen in the neglect of his clothes; although many a one, under a gay coat, hath a heavy heart. But this attire doth not only testify, but make, cheerfulness in the soul: *Thou hast put*

³ Heb. xiii. 8. ⁴ Deut. xxix. 5. ⁵ Eccles. ix. 7, 8.

*gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased*⁶; and, *In thy presence is the fulness of joy*⁷. What can this apparel of ours do, but keep us from a blast, or a shower? It is so far from safe-guarding the soul, that it many times wounds it, and that to the death. The rich glutton was *clothed in purple and fine linen*⁸. How many souls will hereafter wish that their bodies had been ever either naked or clad with hair-cloth! But this array, as it is infinitely rich and beautiful, so it is as surely a defence to the soul; and is no less than armour of proof against all assaults, all miseries⁹. Whatever, therefore, become of the outward man, let it be my care that my soul put on the Lord Jesus Christ: so shall I be sure to be safe, rich, amiable, here; and, hereafter, glorious. It was part of our Saviour's Charge upon the Mount, *Take no thought, saying, . . . Where-withal shall we be clothed*¹? But it must be the main care of our lives how to put on Christ upon our souls. This is the "best robe" wherewith the father of the prodigal graced his returned son. The heaven of heavens is not worth such another.—*Select Thoughts*, xiii.

⁶ Ps. iv. 7.⁷ Ps. xvi. 11.⁸ Luke xvi. 19.⁹ Eph. vi. 13.¹ Mat. vi. 31.

All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.—St. Matthew xxi. 4, 5. (*Gospel.*)

THOU wouldest not lose aught of thy right. Thou, that wast a king, wouldest be proclaimed so : but, that it might appear thy kingdom was not of this world, thou, that couldst have commanded all worldly magnificence, thoughtest fit to abandon it.

Instead of the kings of the earth, who, reigning by thee, might have been employed in thine attendance, the people are thy heralds. Their homely garments are thy footcloth and carpets ; their green boughs, the strewings of the way. Those palms which were wont to be borne in the hands of them that triumph, are strewed under the feet of thy beast. It was thy greatness and honour, to condemn those glories which worldly hearts were wont to admire.

Justly did thy followers hold the best ornaments of the earth worthy of no better than thy treading upon ; neither could they ever account their garments so rich, as when they had been trampled upon by thy carriage. How happily

did they think their backs disrobed for thy way ! How gladly did they spend their breath in acclaiming thee ! *Hosanna to the Son of David ; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord ; Hosanna in the highest.* Where now are the great masters of the synagogue, that had enacted the ejection of whoever should confess Jesus to be the Christ ? Lo, here are bold and undaunted clients of the Messiah, that dare proclaim him in the public road, in the open streets. In vain shall the impotent enemies of Christ hope to suppress his glory : as soon shall they with their hand hide the face of the sun from shining to the world, as withhold the beams of his Divine truth from the eyes of men by their envious opposition. In spite of all Jewish malignity, his kingdom is confessed, applauded, blessed.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 25.*

And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this !—St. Matthew xxi. 10. (*Gospel.*)

No doubt, there were many that would not so much as leave their shopboard, and step to their doors or their windows, to say, *Who is this ?* as not thinking it could concern them who

passed by, so long as they might sit still. Those Greeks were in some measure on the way to good, that could say to Philip, *We would see Jesus*². O Saviour, thou hast been so long amongst us, that it is our just shame if we know thee not. If we have been hitherto slack, let our zealous inquiry make amends for our neglect. Let outward pomp and worldly glory draw the hearts and tongues of carnal men after them ; oh let it be my care and happiness to ask after nothing but thee !

The attending disciples could not be at a loss for an answer. Which of the Prophets have not put it into their mouths ? *Who is this ?* Ask Moses, and he shall tell you, *The seed of the woman that shall bruise the serpent's head*. Ask our father Jacob, and he shall tell you, *The Shiloh, of the tribe of Judah*. Ask David, and he shall tell you, *The King of Glory*. Ask Isaiah, he shall tell you, *Immanuel, Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace*. Ask Jeremiah, and he shall tell you, *The Righteous Branch*. Ask Daniel, and he shall tell you, *The Messiah*. Ask John the Baptist, he shall tell you, *The Lamb of God*.

² John xii. 21.

If ye ask the God of the Prophets, he hath told you, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Yea, if all these be too good for you to consult with, the devils themselves have been forced to say, *I know thee, who thou art, even the holy One of God.* On no side hath Christ left himself without a testimony; and, accordingly, the multitude here have their answer ready, *This is Jesus, the Prophet, of Nazareth of Galilee.*

Ye undervalue your Master, O ye well-meaning followers of Christ. *A Prophet? Yea, and more than a Prophet!* John the Baptist was so, yet was but the harbinger of this Messiah. This was that God, by whom the prophets were both sent and inspired. *Of Nazareth*, say you? Ye mistake him: Bethlehem was the place of his birth, the proof of his tribe, the evidence of his Messiahship. If Nazareth was honoured by his preaching, there was no reason why he should be dishonoured by Nazareth. No doubt, he whom you confessed pardoned the error of your confession. Ye spake but according to the common style: the two disciples, in their walk to Emmaus, after the death and resurrection of Christ, gave him no other title. This belief

passed current with the people ; and thus high even the vulgar thoughts could then rise : and, no doubt, even thus much was for that time very acceptable to the Father of Mercies. If we make profession of the truth according to our knowledge, though there may be much imperfection in our apprehension and delivery, the mercy of our God takes it well ; not judging us for what we have not, but accepting us in what we have. Shouldst thou, O God, stand strictly upon the punctual degrees of knowledge, how wide would it go with millions of souls ! for, besides much error in many, there is more ignorance. But herein do we justly magnify and adore thy goodness, that, where thou findest diligent endeavour of better information, matched with an honest simplicity of heart, thou passest by our unwilling defects, and crownest our well-meant confessions.—*Ibid.*

The Second Sunday in Advent.

Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.—Romans xv. 4. (*Epistle.*)

THE Scripture is the sun ; the Church is the clock whose hand points us to, and whose sound tells us, the hours of the day. The sun we know to be sure, and regularly constant in his motion : the clock, as it may fall out, may go too fast or too slow. We are wont to look at, and listen to, the clock, to know the time of day ; but, where we find the variation sensible, we believe the sun against the clock ; not the clock against the sun. As, then, we would condemn him of much folly, that should profess to trust the clock rather than the sun ; so we cannot but justly tax the miscredulity of those, who will rather trust to the Church than to the Scripture. —*Select Thoughts*, vi.

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ; men's

hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth : for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.—St. Luke xxi. 25—27. (*Gospel.*)

THE holiest man may not be exempt from the dread, but from the slavish fear, of the Great Judge. We know his infinite justice ; we are conscious to ourselves of our manifold failings : how can we lay these two together, and not fear ? But this fear works not in us a malignant kind of repining at the severe tribunal of the Almighty (as, commonly, whom we fear we hate) ; but rather a careful endeavour so to approve ourselves that we may be acquitted by him, and appear blameless in his presence.

How justly may we tremble, when we look upon our own actions, our own deserts ! But how confidently may we appear at the bar, when we are beforehand assured of a discharge ! *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*³. When we think of an universal conflagration of the world, how can we but fear ? But when we think of a happy *restitution of all things*⁴ at that day, how can we but *rejoice with trembling* ?

³ Rom. v. 1.

⁴ Acts iii. 21.

Represent unto thy thoughts, that which was showed of old to the prophet Daniel, in vision. Imagine that thou sawest the Ancient of Days sitting upon a throne like the fiery flame; a fiery flame issuing and coming forth from before him: thousand thousands ministering unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him; the judgment set, and the books opened⁵; or, as John, the Daniel of the New Testament, saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and the dead, both small and great, standing before God; and the books opened; and the dead judged out of those things which were written in those books, according to their works⁶. Let the eyes of thy mind see, beforehand, that which these bodily eyes shall hereafter see; and tell me how thou feelest thyself affected with the sight of such a Judge, such an appearance, such a process: and, if thou findest thyself in a trembling condition, cheer up thyself with this, that thy Judge is thine Advocate; that upon that throne there sits no greater Majesty than Mercy. It is thy Saviour that shall sentence thee.

⁵ See Dan. vii. 9, 10.

See Rev. xx. 11, 12.

How safe then art thou, under such hands ! Canst thou fear that He will doom thee to death who died to give thee life ? Canst thou fear that He will condemn thee for those sins which He hath given his blood to expiate ? Canst thou fear the rigour of that justice which He hath so fully satisfied ? Canst thou apprehend the miscarriage of that soul which He hath so dearly bought ?

No, my son, all this divine state and magnificence makes for thee. Let those guilty and impenitent souls who have treasured up unto themselves *wrath against the day of wrath*⁷ tremble at the glorious majesty of the Son of God ; since for them nothing remains *but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries*⁸. But, as for thee, who art not only reconciled unto God by the mediation of the Son of his love, but art also incorporated into Christ, and made a true member of his mystical body, thou art bidden, together with all the faithful, to look up and lift up thy head ; for now the day of thy redemption is come¹.

And, indeed, how canst thou do otherwise,

⁷ Rom. ii. 5.

⁸ Heb. x. 27.

¹ See Luke xxi. 28. Eph. iv. 30.

since, by virtue of this blessed union with thy Saviour, this glory is thine? Every member hath an interest in the honour of the head.

Rejoice, therefore, in the day of the Lord Jesus²; and, when *all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him*³, do thou sing and rejoice; and call to the heavens and the earth to bear thee company.

Thou art affrighted with the thoughts of that great day:—think of it oftener, and thou shalt less fear it. It will come, both surely and suddenly: let thy frequent thoughts anticipate it. It will come, as a thief in the night, without warning, without noise: let thy careful vigilance always expect it; and thy soul shall be sure not to be surprised, not to be confounded. Thine audit is both sure and uncertain:—sure, that it will be; uncertain, when it will be. If thou wilt approve thyself a good steward, have thine account always ready: set thy reckoning still even, betwixt God and thy soul. *Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing*⁴. —*Balm of Gilead*, § iii.—v.

² Phil. ii. 17, 18.

³ Rev. i. 7.

⁴ Mat. xxiv. 46.

The Third Sunday in Advent.

He that judgeth me is the Lord.—1 Cor. iv. 4. (*Epistle.*)

WITH what terror doth the malefactor stand at the bar ! His hand trembles, while it is lifted up for the trial : his very lips quake, while he saith, Not guilty : his countenance condemns him, before the judge ; and his fear is ready to execute him, before his hangman. Yet, the judge is but a weak man, that must soon die himself : that sentence of death, which he can pronounce, is already passed by nature upon the most innocent : that act of death, which the law inflicts by him, is but momentary : who knows whether himself shall not die more painfully ?

O God, with what horror shall the guilty stand before thy dreadful Tribunal, in the day of the great assizes of the world : while there is the presence of an Infinite Majesty, to daunt him ; a fierce and clamorous conscience, to give in evidence against him ; legions of devils, waiting to seize upon him ; a gulf of unquenchable fire, ready to receive him ; while the glory of the Judge is no less confounding, than the cruelty of

the tormentors ; where the sentence is unavoidable, and the execution everlasting ! Why do not these terrors of thee, my God, make me wise, to hold a privy sessions upon my soul and actions ; that, being acquitted by my own heart, I may not be condemned by thee ; and being judged by myself, I may not be condemned with the world ?—*Occasional Meditations*, lxxxix.

When John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another ?—St. Matthew xi. 2, 3. (*Gospel*.)

IF the doubtful sons of men shall, in their peevish infidelity, be apt to renew the question of John's disciples : *Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another ?* thine ever blessed and co-eternal Spirit hath fully attested thee as that only true, absolute, perfect Mediator, by whom the great work of man's redemption is accomplished.

So, then, ye perverse Jews and scoffing Gentiles, that are still ready to upbraid us with the impotency and sufferings of a despised Redeemer, and to tell us of the rags of his manger, of the homeliness of his education, of his temptation and transportation by the devil, of his contempt-

ible train, of his hunger and weariness and indigence, of his whips and thorns, of his agony in the garden of Gethsemane, of his opprobrious crucifixion in Calvary, of his parted garments and his borrowed grave;—is not this He, to whose homely cradle a glorious and supernatural star guided the Sages of the East for their adoration? is not this He, whose birth, declared by one glorious angel, was celebrated by a multitude of the heavenly host, with that divine anthem of, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men*⁵? is not this He that filled the world with his divine and beneficial miracles; healing all diseases by his word, restoring limbs to the lame, giving eyes to the born blind, casting out devils, raising the dead, commanding winds and seas, acknowledged by an audible voice from heaven? is not this He, whom the very ejected devils were forced to confess to be the Son of the everliving God? whom the heaven and all the elements owned for their Almighty Creator? whose sufferings darkened the sun, and shook the earth, and rent the rocks in pieces? and, lastly, whom the dead saints and the heavenly angels attended, in his powerful resurrection

⁵ Luke ii. 9—14.

and glorious ascension? O Saviour, abundantly "justified in the spirit," against all the malignances of men and devils!—*Great Mystery of Godliness*, § vii.

This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.—St. Matthew xi. 10. (*Gospel.*)

JOHN's note was still, repentance! the axe to the root, the fan to the floor, the chaff to the fire! As his raiment was rough, so was his tongue; and if his food was wild honey, his speech was stinging locusts. Thus must the way be made for Christ in every heart. Plausibility is not fit preface to regeneration. If the heart of man had continued upright, God might have been entertained without contradiction; but now violence must be offered to our corruption, ere we can have room for grace. If the great way-maker do not cast down hills and raise up valleys in the bosoms of men, there is no passage for Christ. Never will Christ come into that soul where the herald of repentance hath not been before him.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament*, Book ii. Con. 2.

The Fourth Sunday in Advent.

Rejoice in the Lord alway : and again I say, Rejoice.—
Phil. iv. 4. (*Epistle.*)

SURELY it is inconsistent, that any one, who walks with a God of all comfort, should carry with him a heavy heart, and a sad countenance, as if pressed against his will into the service ; nor is it possible but that the presence of such a companion should inspire, increase, and excite our courage. This is what the Apostle frequently commands, *Rejoice in the Lord alway*. And indeed, if we view the case aright, what mortal is there who can have so good reason to rejoice as a true Christian ;—who perceives that God is his companion, his way of salvation, his hope, his glory ;—who has God for his Father, Christ for his Redeemer, the Holy Spirit for his Comforter, angels for his servants, the world for his slave, and heaven for his inheritance ;—whose enemies are his benefactors ; whose afflictions, his medicine ; whose death, his gain ? There are certain dispositions of mind, varying with the temperature of the humours, more dull than others, and

more prone to natural melancholy : but even men of this temperament, when grace has once begun to prevail, ought to rejoice, comfortably at all events, in God, however sad and sorrowful they may feel before the world. *Lord*, exclaims the Psalmist, *lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased* ⁶. Behold the harvest and the vintage of the believer ; even that most true and solid consolation, which proceeds from the light of God's countenance.—*Way of Enoch, or Walking with God.*

In truth, we sin if we rejoice not. There is not more error in false mirth, than in unjust heaviness. If the men of this world offend, in that they laugh when they ought to mourn ; we shall offend no less, if we droop, while we have cause of cheerfulness. Shall we envy, or scorn, to see one joy in earthly riches ; another, in a vain title : one, in a dainty dish ; another, in a jest : one, in a book ; another, in a friend : one, in a kite ; another, in a dog ; while we enjoy the God of heaven, and are sorrowful ? What dull metal

⁶ Ps. iv. 6, 7.

is this we are made of? We have the fountain of joy, and yet complain of heaviness! Is there any joy without God? Certainly, if joy be good, and all goodness be from him; whence should joy arise, but from him? And, if he be the author of joy; how are we Christians, and rejoice not? What! do we freeze in the fire, and starve at a feast? Have we a good conscience, and yet pine and hang down the head? When God hath made us happy, do we make ourselves miserable?

When I ask my heart David's question, I know not whether I be more angry or ashamed at the answer;—*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*⁷ My body, my purse, my fame, my friends, may be the reason of this sadness; or, perhaps, none of these,—only, I am sad because I am. And what if all these,—what if more,—when I come to my better mind? Have I a Father, an Advocate, a Comforter, a mansion in heaven? If both earth and hell conspired to afflict me, my sorrow cannot counterbalance the causes of my joy. Now I can challenge all adversaries: and either defy all miseries, or bid all crosses, yea death itself, welcome.

⁷ Ps. xlii. 7.

Yet God doth not abridge us of earthly solaces, which dare weigh with our disappointments, and sometimes depress the balance. His greater light doth not extinguish the less. If God had not thought them blessings, he had not bestowed them : and how are they blessings, if they delight us not ? Books, friends, health, reputation, competency, may give occasions, but not bounds, to our rejoicings. We may not make them God's rivals, but his spokesmen. In themselves, they are nothing ; but, in God, worth our joy. These may be used : yet so as they may be absent without distraction. Let these go ; so that God alone be present with us, it is enough ; he were not God, if he were not all-sufficient. We have Him, I speak boldly : we have Him, in feeling, in faith, in pledges and earnest ; yea, in possession. Why do we not enjoy Him ? Why do we not shake off that senseless drowsiness, which makes our lives unpleasant ? Why not leave all heaviness to those that want God ;—to those that either know Him not, or know Him displeased ?—*Epistles, Decade ii. Ep. 8.*

John answered them, saying, I baptize with water : but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not ; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose

shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.—St. John i. 26, 27. (*Gospel.*)

THERE are great mysteries of art, which the wit and experience of skilful men have discovered: there are greater mysteries of nature, some part whereof have been described by art and industry; but the greater part lies hidden from mortal eyes. But these are less than nothing, to the *Great Mystery of Godliness*. For what are these, but the deep secrets of the creature, mean, therefore, and finite, like itself? But the other are the unfathomable depths of an infinite Deity; fitter for the admiration of the highest angels of heaven than for the reach of human conception.

Great were the mysteries of the Law; neither could the face of Moses be seen without his veil: but what other were these than the shadows of this *Great Mystery of Godliness*? What did that golden ark overspread with glorious cherubims, that gorgeous temple, those perfumed altars, those bleeding sacrifices, that sumptuous priesthood, but prefigure thee, O blessed Saviour, which, in the fulness of time, shouldst be revealed to the world, and make up this *Great Mystery of Godliness*?

There is nothing, O blessed Jesu, that thou

either didst or sufferedst for mankind, which is other than mysterious and wonderful : but the great and astonishing Mystery of Godliness is thyself, *God manifest in the flesh*. Lo, faith itself can never be capable to apprehend a mystery like this. Thou, who art a spirit, and therefore immaterial, invisible, to expose thyself to the view of earthly eyes : thou, who art an infinite spirit, to be enwrapped in flesh : thou, an all-glorious eternal spirit, to put on the rags of human mortality : thou, the great Creator of all things, to become a creature : thou, the omnipotent God, to subject thyself to miserable frailty and infirmity :—O mystery, transcending the full apprehension of even glorified souls ! If but one of thy celestial spirits have, upon thy gracious mission, assumed a visible shape, and therein appeared to any of thy servants of old, it hath been a spectacle of so dreadful astonishment, that it could not be consistent with life : even so much honour was thought not less than deadly : neither could the patient make any other account, than to be killed with the kindness of that glory : what shall we say then, that thou, who art the God of those spirits, and therefore infinitely more glorious than all the hierarchy of heaven, vouchsafedst, not in a vanishing apparition, but in a

settled state of many years' continuance, to show thyself in our flesh, and to converse with men in their own shape and condition? *O Great Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh*;—so great, that the holy ambition of the heavenly angels could not reach higher than the desire to look down into it^a.—*The Great Mystery of Godliness*, § 1.

Christmas Day.

These last days.—Heb. i. 2. (*Epistle.*)

NATURE, Law, and Grace, divide all the ages of the world. Now, as it is with man, who is a lesser world, that in every day there is a resemblance of his whole life;—the morning is his childhood, the midway his youth, the evening his old age;—so is it in this greater world. The dim break of day was the state of nature; and this was the non-age of the world, wherein the light of knowledge, both of human and divine things, was but weak and obscure. The sun

^a 1 Pet. i. 12.

was risen higher in the state of the Law; but yet not without thick mists and shadows, till the high noon of that true Sun of Righteousness, who personally shone forth to the world; upon whose vertical point began the age of Grace, which still continues; which is the clear afternoon, and full vigour of the world, though now in its sensible declination: after this, there shall be no time, but eternity. These then are they which both the Prophets and Apostles have styled the last days: not only in respect of the times that went before them, but because no time shall follow them. Neither have we reason to be perplexed at the large latitude of sixteen hundred years; there was neither of the two other periods of age but were longer than this. Besides, however childhood and youth have their fixed terms which they ordinarily pass not, yet the duration of old age is indefinite. We have, in our youth, known some grey-heads, that have continued vigorous till we have lived to catch them in the colour of their livery. And if this be, as it is, the evening of the world, we do not see much difference of time in the shutting in of the light. A summer's evening is a winter's day. But if these were to the Apostles the last days, how can they be other than in the last hour, yea,

the last minute, unto us? Why do we not put ourselves into a constant expectation of the end of all things, and set ourselves in a meet posture for the receipt of our returning Saviour?—*Select Thoughts*, xi.

His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.—Heb. i. 2. (*Epistle*.)

IF the Queen of Sheba admired the wisdom, the buildings, the domestic order, of Solomon, and chiefly his stately ascent into the house of the Lord, how should our souls be taken up with wonder at thee, O thou true Son of David, and Prince of everlasting Peace, who receivedst the Spirit not by measure! who hast built this glorious house, not made with hands, even the heaven of heavens! whose infinite providence hath sweetly disposed of all the family of thy creatures both in heaven and earth! and who, lastly, didst ascend up on high, and leddest captivity captive, and gavest gifts to men!—*Contemplations upon the Old Testament*, Book xvii. Con. 6.

When he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.—Heb. i. 6. (*Epistle*.)

THOSE heavenly spirits had, ever since they

were made, seen his most glorious Deity, and adored him as their omnipotent Creator: but, to see that God of spirits invested with flesh, was such a wonder as had been enough, if their nature could have been capable of it, to have astonished even glory itself; and whether, to see him that was their God so humbled below themselves, were the greater wonder to them, they only know.
—*Meditation on the Love of Christ*, § 4.

No less than a whole choir of angels are worthy to sing the hymn of *Glory to God*, for the Incarnation of his Son: what joy is enough for us, whose nature he took, and whom he came to restore by his Incarnation? If we had the tongues of angels, we could not raise this note high enough, to the praise of our glorious Redeemer.

No sooner do the shepherds hear the news of a Saviour, than they run to Bethlehem to seek him. Those that left their beds to tend their flocks, leave their flocks to inquire after their Saviour. No earthly thing is too dear to be forsaken for Christ. If we suffer any worldly occasion to stay us from Bethlehem, we care more for our sheep than for our souls. It is not possible that a faithful heart should hear where

Christ is, and not labour to the sight, the fruition of him. Where art thou, O Saviour, but at home in thine own house, in the assembly of thy saints ? where art thou to be found, but in thy word and sacraments ? Yea, there thou seekest for us : if there we haste not to seek for thee, we deserve to want thee ; we deserve that our want of thee here should make us to want the presence of thy face for ever.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book i. Con. 3.*

In Him was life ; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness ; and the darkness comprehended it not.—St. John i. 4, 5. (*Gospel.*)

THOU hast taught us, O Saviour, that even the light of man may be darkness, and that the light endarkened causeth the greatest darkness⁹.

Neither can it be otherwise : since the very obscuring of the light maketh some kind of darkness, the utter extinction of it must needs make the darkness absolute. Now, what is darkness, but a mere privation of light ? There is but a double spiritual light, the absence whereof causeth darkness. Thine Evangelist hath justly spoken of thee as *the true light, which*

⁹ Mat. vi. 23.

*lighteth every man that cometh into the world*¹. Thy Psalmist hath said of thy Divine Oracles: *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*². Whosoever wants both, or either of them, cannot but be in darkness: yea his pretended light cannot but be darkness itself. I see, O Lord, there is much of this dark light in the world. In one, I observe a kind of glow-worm light, which, in a summer's evening, shines somewhat bright, but he that should attempt to light his candle at it, would be much deceived; this is justly a dark light, since it shines not at all by day, neither is at all communicable to another, no, not to the bearer himself. In another, I see the light of a dark lantern, which casts out some gleams of light; but only to him that bears it: even this man's light is darkness also to all the world besides himself. In a third, I see a resemblance of that meteorical light, which appears in moorish places, that seems fire but is nothing but a slimy glittering exhalation: causing both the wonder and error of the traveller; and of this kind I find too much variety; all of them agreeing in this, that they pretend visions and revelations of the Spirit, even for contrary

¹ John i. 9.² Ps. cxix. 105.

projections. O Saviour, what light soever is not derived from thee is no better than darkness ! Thou hast sufficiently revealed thyself and thy will to us, in thy word : as for any new lights, except it be a clearer manifestation of the old, O Lord, give me the grace not to follow them ! I find a double light to proceed from thee ; one, which is a general light that enlightens every man that comes into the world ; the other, the especial light of thy Spirit, illuminating the soul of every believer, with a right apprehension of thee and heavenly things. Oh, do thou shine into my soul, with this heavenly light of thine ; and if this be not enough to make me happy, without the accession and with the rejection of other lights, let me sit in perpetual darkness.—*Soliloquies*, xii.

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.—St. John i. 14. (*Gospel*.)

WHAT proportion could there be, O blessed Jesu, betwixt God and a man,—betwixt finite and infinite ? The only power of thy everlasting and immeasurable love hath so reduced one of these to the other, that both are united in that glorious person of thine, to make up an absolute

Saviour of Mankind. O the height and depth of this super-celestial mystery,—that the infinite Deity and finite flesh should meet in one subject ! yet so, as the humanity should not be absorbed in the Godhead, nor the Godhead limited by the humanity, but both inseparably united : that the Godhead is not humanized, the humanity is not Deified : both are indivisibly conjoined ; conjoined so, as without confusion distinguished. So wert thou, O God, *manifest in the flesh*, that thou, the Word of thine Eternal Father, wert *made flesh, and dwelledst among us ; and we men beheld thy glory, the glory as of the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*³. Yet, so wert thou made flesh, as not by conversion into flesh, but as by assumption of flesh to thine eternal Deity ; assumption, not into the nature of the Godhead, but into the person of thee who art God everlasting. O mystery of Godliness, incomprehensibly glorious ! Cease, cease, O human curiosity ; and, where thou canst not comprehend, wonder and adore.—*Great Mystery of Godliness*, § ii.

O blessed Saviour, thou, the true God mani-

³ John i 14.

fest in the flesh⁴, be thou pleased to manifest unto the soul of thy servant the unspeakable riches of thy love and mercy to mankind, in that great work of our redemption! Vouchsafe to affect my heart with a lively sense of that infinite goodness of thine towards the most wretched of thy creatures: that, for our sake, thou camest down, and clothedst thyself in our flesh; and clothedst that pure and holy flesh with all the miseries that are incident to this sinful flesh of ours: and wast content to undergo a bitter, painful, ignominious death from the hands of man, that, by dying, thou mightest overcome death, and ransom him from that hell to which he was, without thee, irrecoverably forfeited; and fetch him forth to life, liberty, and glory. Oh, let me not see only, but feel, this thy great mystery of godliness effectually working me to all hearty thankfulness for so inestimable a mercy; to all holy resolutions to glorify thee, in all my actions, in all my sufferings! Didst thou, O Saviour, being God Eternal, take flesh for me; and shall not I, when thou callest, be willing to lay down this sinful flesh for thee again? Wert thou content to abridge thyself, for the time, not only of

⁴ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

thy heavenly magnificence, but of all earthly comforts, for my sake ; and shall not I, for thy dear sake, renounce all the wicked pleasures of sin ? Didst thou wear out the days of thy flesh in poverty, toil, reproach, and all earthly hardship ; and shall I spend my time in pampering this flesh in wanton dalliance, in the ambitious and covetous pursuit of vain honours and deceitful riches ? Blessed Lord, thou wast manifest in the flesh, not only to be a ransom for our souls, but to be a precedent for our lives : far, far be it from me, thus to imitate the great pattern of holiness. O Jesu, the author and finisher of my faith and salvation, teach me to tread in thy gracious steps ; to run with patience the race that is set before me ; to endure the cross, to despise the shame ; to be crucified to the world ; to work all righteousness !—*Great Mystery of Godliness*, § iv.

Saint Stephen's Day.

Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.—Acts vii. 55. (*Epistle.*)

MAN, on his deathbed, hath a double prospect ; which, in his lifetime, the interposition of pleasure and miseries debarred him from. The good man looks upward, and sees heaven open, with Stephen ; and the glorious angels, ready to carry up his soul. The wicked man looks downward, and sees three terrible spectacles ; Death, Judgment, Hell, one beyond another ; and all to be passed through, by his soul. I marvel not, that the godly have been so cheerful in death, that those torments, whose very sight hath overcome the beholders, have seemed easy to them. I marvel not, that a wicked man is so loth to hear of death ; so dejected, when he feeleth sickness ; and so desperate when he feeleth the pangs of death : nor that every Balaam would fain die the death of the righteous. Henceforth, I will envy none but a good man : I will pity nothing so much as the prosperity of the wicked.—*Meditations and Vows, Century 1.*

And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.—Acts vii. 56. (*Epistle.*)

HAD I been in the streets of Jericho, sure, methinks, I should have justled with Zaccheus for the sycamore, to see Jesus; and should have blessed my eyes for so happy a prospect: and yet, I consider that many a one saw his face on earth, which shall never see his glory in heaven; and I hear the Apostle say, *Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him [so] no more*⁵. Oh! for the eyes of a Stephen, that *saw the heavens opened, and the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God!* That prospect did as much transcend this of Zaccheus as heaven is above earth, celestial glory above human infirmity. And why should not the eyes of my faith behold the same object, which was seen by Stephen's bodily eyes? I see thee, O Saviour, I see thee; as certainly, though not so clearly. Do thou sharpen and fortify these weak eyes of mine, that in *thy light, I may see light*⁶.—*Select Thoughts.*

⁵ 2 Cor. v. 16.

⁶ See Ps. xxxvi. 9.

How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.—St. Matthew xxiii. 37. (*Gospel.*)

How justly do I marvel, O God, to see what strength of natural affection thou hast wrought in poor brute creatures towards their masters, and towards their own mates, towards their dams and their young! We have plentiful instances of those whom death could not separate from their beloved guardians; some, that have died for their masters; some, with them: some, that have fearlessly hazarded their own lives for the preservation of their young ones; some, that have fed their aged dams with the food which they have spared from their own maws. Amongst the rest, how remarkable is that comparison of thine, O Saviour, wherein thou wast pleased to set forth thy tender care of thine Israel, by the resemblance of a hen gathering her chickens under her wings⁷. How have I seen that poor fowl, after the patience of a painful hatching, clucking her little brood together; and, when she hath perceived the puttock hovering over her head, in a varied note calling them hastily under the wing of her protection, and there

⁷ Mat. xxiii. 37.

covertly hiding them, not from the talons only, but from the eye of that dangerous enemy ; till the peril hath been fully over ! after which she calls them forth to their liberty and repast ; and, with many a careful scrape, discovers to them such grains of food, as may be fit for them ; contenting herself to carve for them, with neglect of her own sustenance. O God, thou who hast wrought in thy silly creatures such a high measure of indulgence and dearness of respect towards their tender brood, how infinite is thy love and compassion towards the children of men, the great masterpiece of thy creation ! How past the admiration of men and angels is that transcendent proof of thy divine love in the more than marvellous work of our redemption ! How justly glorifiable is thy name, in the gracious and sometimes miraculous preservation of thy children ! in the experience whereof, if I forbear to magnify thee,—or dare not to trust thee,—how can I be but unworthy to be owned of thee, or blessed by thee ?—*Soliloquies*, lxviii.

Saint John the Evangelist's Day.

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.—1 St. John i. 5. (*Epistle.*)

NOTHING in this world so much concerns a man as to settle his heart in a right apprehension of his God ; which must be the ground of all his piety and devotion : without which, all his pretences of religion are so nothing worth, forasmuch as that in them God is made our idol, and we the mis-worshippers of him : without which, shortly, our whole life is misspent in error and ignorance, and ends in a miserable discomfort. Whence it is, that this dear disciple makes it the sum of all the apostolical mission, which he had from his Lord and Saviour, to inform the world what to think of God : *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light.*

God would have us by this to be led to the conceit of the transcendent glory of his incomprehensible Deity ; and would have us, when we think of him, to be put in mind of admiring an uncreated, immaterial, super-intelligible brightness, of

a glory so much above all spiritual natures as the light is above the bodily and visible. Whereupon it is, that, when the Spirit of God, by his Apostle, describes the habitation of God, he doth it in these terms, That he dwelleth *in the light which no man can approach unto* ⁸: and when he describes the heaven of the elect, he calls it *the inheritance of the saints in light* ⁹.

Away then with all dull and darksome imaginations, when we address ourselves to the Throne of Grace; and let us adore an Infinite Spirit, dwelling in an inaccessible light, attended with millions of Angels of light, and glorified spirits of his saints in a light unspeakable and glorious. This shall be the first glimpse of our enlightened understanding when we would comfortably appear before God. In which regard, I fear many of us Christians are much defective in our holy devotions: speaking unto God, and thinking of him, sullenly and sadly; as shut up in some remote and unknown darkness on the other side of the world; or, at least, without the lively apprehension of that wonderful radiance of glory where-with he is invested; misconceiving herein of that

⁸ 1 Tim. vi. 16.

⁹ Col. i. 12.

Deity whom we implore ; who hath revealed himself unto us by the name of Light.

And, surely, as none but an eagle can look upon the light of the sun, so none but the confirmed eyes of an illuminated Christian can behold God in this notion of his celestial splendour ; which we must so labour to attain unto and settle in our minds, as that we should no more think of the blessed Deity without the conceit of an infinite resplendence, than we can open our eyes at noon-day without the admission of an outward light.

Now the reflection of the first quality of light upon us, must be our clear apprehension of God, the world, and ourselves. By how much more exact knowledge we shall attain unto of all these, by so much more do we conform ourselves to that God who is Light ; and, by how much less we know them, so much more darkness there is in us, and so much less fellowship have we with God. If the eye have not an inward light in itself, let the sun shine never so bright upon it, it is nevertheless blind. What are we the better for that which is in God, if there be not an inward light in our souls to answer and receive it ?

The word of truth, then, is the body of that

light which God shows to men. Oh, let it not shine upon us in vain : let us not trample upon the beams of it in our floor ; as that foolish woman, that St. Austin speaks of, did to those of the sun, with a "Calco Manichæorum Deum." But now, while God gives these happy opportunities, let us enlarge our hearts to receive it with all joy and thankfulness. And if Moses, by conferring with God but forty days and nights in the delivery of the Law, had a glorious brightness in his face ; oh, let us, that more than forty years have had conversation with God in his Gospel, shine with the resplendent beams of heavenly knowledge.

Some of the best interpreters have taken this metaphor of light to imply the purity and perfect goodness of God : in whom, as there is an infinite clearness of understanding, so also, an infinite rectitude of will : insomuch as his will is the rule of all right : neither doth he will ought, because it is good ; but therefore it is good, because he wills it. Goodness hath no less brightness in it, than truth ; and wickedness, as it is never without error, so it is no less dark than it.

Justly, therefore, is God all Light, in that he is all pure and good. And the reflection of this

quality upon us must be our holiness : for *This is the will of God, even your sanctification*¹. The more holy then we are, the more we conform to him that is light. *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more*². As, contrarily, sins are the works of darkness ; the mover of them is the prince of darkness ; the agents of them are the sons of darkness ; their trade is walking in darkness ; and the end of them is utter darkness. While he says then *Be ye holy, for I am holy*³, he doth as good as say "Be ye light, as I am light." *Ye were darkness ; but now*, it is God's own phrase, *are ye light in the Lord*, saith St. Paul to his Ephesians⁴. Justly therefore doth it follow, *WALK as children of light* : in right ways ; with straight steps. And surely, if God be light, and we darkness, what interest can we claim in Him ? For, *what communion hath light with darkness*⁵ ? Oh the comfortable and happy condition then of those that are in God ! they are still in light. *Truly the light is sweet*, saith wise Solomon ; *and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun*⁶ : as, on the contrary, it is a woful and disconsolate estate

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 3.² Prov. iv. 18.³ 1 Pet. i. 16.⁴ Eph. v. 8.⁵ 2 Cor. vi. 14.⁶ Eccles. xi. 7.

to live in any sin. This is no other than to be dungeoned up in a perpetual darkness.—*Sermon xxxi.*

Jesus said unto Peter, Follow me.—St. John xxi. 19.
(*Gospel.*)

THAT expostulation of Elijah with the Israelites of old savoured somewhat of indignation, *How long halt ye between two opinions'?* In vain shall any one hope to walk with God without the honest sincerity of an upright heart. Neither, however, can we walk with Him, unless our paths, as well as our footsteps, be straight also ; God cannot walk any way but the right ; if we choose to follow crooked paths, we must walk by ourselves. All the paths of righteousness tend, in a direct line, towards heaven ; whereas the ways of sinners are full of turnings and windings, and lead, through a thousand dark and intricate labyrinths, downward to the chambers of death : the two are throughout so contrary the one to the other, that they can never meet, nor even cross each other. It cannot but happen, that the feet even of the best of men may sometimes slip, and decline a little from this sacred track ; but he im-

mediately recollects himself, recovers his former attitude, and, struck with righteous shame, obtains advantage from the very fall. But, if there be any one whose steps have worn for him a path by constant treading in any known sin, and have persevered therein ; let that man know that he walks with the enemy of mankind, the devil.— *On the Manner of Walking with God.*

The Innocents' Day.

These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.—Rev. xiv. 4. (*Epistle.*)

WE esteem it a matter of no common dignity to be ranked even among the servants and attendants of princes ; but to communicate freely and familiarly with the noble seems to be something that exalts a man above the common rank, and invests him with a higher character and demeanour : how much more honourable must it be, beyond all bounds of comparison indeed, to walk continually, in a way of friendly converse, with the great King and Lord of Heaven and Earth ! That was no common privilege bestowed on the

twelve Apostles, to have been chosen out of the whole race of man, as the servants of Christ, to attend him always whithersoever he went, while he continued in the state of humiliation and servitude : yet, that was a far greater distinction which was conferred on Peter, James, and John, to be singled out from the rest of their companions, to go up with their Lord into Mount Tabor, the witnesses of his mysterious transfiguration : and not only that, but to retire with Him, in his last hours, to the garden of Gethsemane, the witnesses, again, of his most bitter agony, a favour not extended to the rest. But oh ! how far exceeding the highest emulation of man, is the prerogative vouchsafed to us, who, by the most powerful grace of God, are delivered out of the world, to accompany for ever the Almighty and most Glorious Creator and Lord of the Heavens ! That which was granted to the hundred and forty-four thousand saints, which were redeemed from the earth, and had the name of God written on their foreheads, in token of the highest pre-eminence, *To follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*, is assuredly our lot, if we be not wanting to ourselves : for we shall walk incessantly with the Lamb of God, Christ Jesus, with his co-eternal Father, with his most Holy Spirit. What, then, shall we now prefer to have

our conversation with the beasts that perish ? we, miserable sinners, who have the choice most freely offered us of walking with our God ?—*Manner of Walking with God.*

The angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt.—St. Matthew ii. 13. (*Gospel.*)

ON strange condition of the king of all the world ! He could not be born in a baser estate ; yet even this he cannot enjoy with safety. There was no room for him in Bethlehem ; there will be no room for him in Judea. He is no sooner come to his own than he must fly from them : that he may save them he must avoid them.

Had it not been easy for thee, O Saviour, to have delivered thyself from Herod a thousand ways ? What could an arm of flesh have done against the God of spirits ? What had it been for thee to have sent Herod five years sooner to his place ? What, to have commanded fire from heaven on those that should have come to apprehend thee ? or to have bidden the earth to receive them alive, whom she meant to swallow dead ? We suffer misery because we must ; thou because thou wouldst. The same will, that brought thee from heaven into earth, sends thee from Jewry

to Egypt. As thou wouldst be born mean and miserable, so thou wouldst live subject to human vexations ; that thou, which hast taught us how good it is to bear the yoke even in our youth, mightest sanctify to us early afflictions. *Out of Egypt have I called my Son*, saith God. That thou calledst thy Son out of Egypt, O God, is no marvel ; it is a marvel that thou calledst him into Egypt ; but that we know all earths are thine, and all places and men are like figures upon a table, such as thy disposition makes them.

What a change is here ! Israel, the firstborn of God, flies out of Egypt into the promised land of Judea : Christ, the firstborn of all creatures, flies from Judea into Egypt. Egypt is become the sanctuary, Judea, the inquisition-house, of the Son of God. He that is every where the same, makes all places alike to His : He makes the fiery furnace a gallery of pleasure ; the lion's den a house of defence ; the whale's belly a lodging chamber ; Egypt a harbour.

He flees, that was able to preserve himself from dangers ; to teach us how lawfully we may flee from those dangers we cannot avoid otherwise. It is a thankless fortitude to offer our throat unto the knife. He that came to die for us fled for his own preservation, and hath bidden us follow him ;

When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another *. We have but the use of our lives, and we are bound to husband them to the best advantage of God and his Church.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book i. Con. 6.*

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under.—St. Matthew ii. 16. (*Gospel.*)

THE tyrant's suspicion would not let him rest long. Ere many days, he sends to inquire of them whom he sent to inquire of Christ. The notice of their secret departure increaseth his jealousy; and now his anger runs mad, and his fear proves desperate.

All the infants of Bethlehem shall bleed for this one; and, that he may make sure work, he cuts out to himself large measures both of time and place. It was but very lately that the star appeared,—that the wise men re-appeared not. They asked for him that was born; they did not name when he was born:—Herod, for more security, overreaches their time, and fetches into the slaughter all the children of two years' age. The priests

* Mat. x. 23.

and scribes had told him that the town of Bethlehem must be the place of the Messiah's nativity : —he fetches in all the children of the coasts adjoining ; yea, his own shall, for the time, be a Bethlehemite. A tyrannous guiltiness never thinks itself safe, but ever seeks to assure itself in the excess of cruelty. Doubtless, he who so privily inquired for Christ did as secretly brew this massacre. The mothers were set, with their children on their laps, feeding them with the breast, or talking to them in the familiar language of their love ; when, suddenly, the executioner rushes in, and snatches them from their arms ; and, at once pulling forth his commission and his knife, without regard to shrieks or tears, murders the innocent babe, and leaves the passionate mother in a mean between madness and death. What cursing of Herod ! What wringing of hands ! What condoling ! What exclaiming was now in the streets of Bethlehem !

O bloody Herod ! that couldst sacrifice so many harmless lives to thine ambition ! What could these infants have done ? If it were thy person whereof thou wast afraid, what likelihood was it thou couldst live till those sucklings might endanger thee ? This news might affect thy successors ; it could not concern thee, if the heat of an impo-

tent and furious envy had not made thee thirsty of blood. It is not long, that thou shalt enjoy this cruelty. After a few hateful years, thy soul shall feel the weight of so many Innocents, of so many just curses. He, for whose sake thou killedst so many, shall strike thee with death ; and then what wouldst thou have given, to have been as one of those infants whom thou murderedst ? In the mean time, when thine executioners returned and told thee of their impartial dispatch, thou smiledst to think how thou hadst defeated thy rival, and beguiled the Star, and deluded the prophecies ; while God in heaven and his Son on earth laugh thee to scorn, and make thy rage an occasion of further glory to him whom thou meantest to suppress.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book i. Con. 6.*

The Sunday after Christmas Day.

When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.—Gal. iv. 4, 5. (*Epistle.*)

I AM now swallowed up, O God, with wonder and astonishment at thy inconceivable mercies.

What shall I say,—that, ere the world was, thou lovedst man that should be ? With an everlasting love hast thou embraced him whom thou madest happy, and foresawest forlorn and miserable. The angels fell ; thou lettest them go : man fell ; and, O thou blessed Son of the Eternal Father, thou wouldst rather divest thyself of the robes of heavenly glory, and come down and put on these rags of our flesh, and therein endure the miseries of a servile life,—the scorns of wretched men, the pains of a bitter and accursed death, the wrath of thy blessed and co-essential Father,—than man should not be recovered. By thy stripes we are healed ; by thy blood we are redeemed ; by thy death we are quickened ; by thy Spirit we are renewed ; by thy merits we are saved : and now, Lord, what an account is this thou hast made of man !

What a wonderful honour is this to which thou hast advanced us ! By thee, O Saviour, we are not only reconciled to God ; but of strangers, are become servants of the most high God ; Acts xvi. 17. Servants ? yea, friends ; James ii. 23 : yea, sons ; the sons of the Highest ; Luke vi. 35. Sons ? yea, heirs ; co-heirs with Christ ; Rom. viii. 17 : co-heritors of immortal glory. 1 Pet. iii. 22.—*Sermon xxix.*

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son ; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.—Gal. iv. 6, 7. (*Epistle.*)

O God, thou mightest have made me a beast ;—yea the ugliest of crawling vermin, that I run away from. I could not have challenged thee ; thy will and thy works are free, thy power absolute. But, lo, thou hast made me thy darling, the quintessence of thy creation, man. *I will praise thee ; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made*⁹. Thou mightest have passed by me, as an outcast reprobate soul,—and so it had been a thousand times better for me never to have been ; but thou hast bought me with a price. I will praise thee, for I am no less wonderfully redeemed. O God, nothing but man, and man regenerate, of all the visible works of thy hands, is capable to give thee the glory of this mighty creation, of thy gracious redemption. The lowest rank of creatures have not life ; the next have not sense ; the third have not reason ; none but the last hath grace to return thee the praise of thy blessed power and mercy.

⁹ Ps. cxxxix. 14.

Oh, let not us be wanting unto thee, who hast thus superabounded unto us.

But this is not all. Thanks is a poor windy payment. Our returns to God must be real. What less than all should we render to our God? Yea, all is too little for one mercy. We owe ourselves to thee, O God, as our Creator. What have we to give thee, as our bounteous Redeemer, as our gracious Sanctifier? Thou, that ownest all, take all. Oh, that our bodies, souls, lives, actions, could be wholly consecrated to thee! Oh, that we could really and constantly begin here those Hallelujahs which we shall ever continue above amidst the choir of saints and angels, giving all praise, and honour, and glory, and immortality to thee, O blessed Father, our Creator; to thee, O blessed and co-eternal Son, our Redeemer; to thee, O blessed and co-essential Spirit, our Sanctifier; one infinite God, in three most glorious and incomprehensible persons, now and evermore! Amen.—*Sermon xxix.*

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which

being interpreted, is, God with us.—St. Matthew i. 22, 23. (*Gospel.*)

BLESSED Jesu, since thou wouldest be a man, why wouldest thou not be the king of men? Since thou wouldest come down to our earth, why wouldest thou not enjoy the best entertainment the earth could yield thee? Yea, since thou, who art the eternal Son of God, wouldest be the Son of Man, why didst thou not appear in a state like to the king of heaven, attended with the glorious retinue of angels? O yet greater wonder of mercies, the same infinite love that brought thee down to the form of man, would also bring thee down, being man, to the form of a servant! So didst thou love man, that thou wouldest take part with him of his misery, that he might take part with thee of thy blessedness: thou wouldest be poor, to enrich us; thou wouldest be burdened, for our ease; tempted, for our victory; despised, for our glory.

With what less than ravishment of spirit can I behold thee, who wert from everlasting clothed with glory and majesty, wrapped in rags! Thee, who fillest heaven and earth with the majesty of thy glory, cradled in a manger! Thee, who art the God of Power, fleeing in thy mother's arms from the rage of a weak man! Thee, who art

the God of Israel, driven to be nursed out of the bosom of thy Church! Thee, who madest the heaven of heavens, busily working in the homely trade of a foster-father! Thee, who commandest the devils to their chains, transported and tempted by that foul spirit! Thee, who art God all-sufficient, exposed to hunger, thirst, weariness, danger, contempt, poverty, revilings, scourgings, persecutions! Thee, who art the just judge of all the World, accused and condemned! Thee, who art the lord of Life, dying upon the tree of shame and curse! Thee, who art the eternal Son of God, struggling with thy Father's wrath! Thee, who hast said, *I and my Father are one*¹, sweating great drops of blood in thine agony; and crying out on the cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*²? Thee, who hast the keys of hell and of death, lying sealed up in another man's grave!

O Saviour, whither hath thy love to mankind carried thee? What sighs, and groans, and tears, and blood hast thou spent upon us wretched men! How dear a price hast thou paid for our ransom! What raptures of spirit can be sufficient for the admiration of thy so infinite mercy? Be thou

¹ John x. 30.

² Mat. xxvii. 46.

swallowed up, O my soul, in this depth of divine love ; and hate to spend thy thoughts any more upon the base objects of this wretched world, when thou hast such a Saviour to take them up.—

Meditation on the Love of Christ, § 5.

The Circumcision of Christ.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also ? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

—Rom iv. 8, 9. (*Epistle.*)

HAVE ye not seen some pictures which, being looked on one way, show some ugly beast or bird, —another way, show an exquisite face ? Even so doth God see our best side with favour, while we see our worst with rigour.

Not that His justice sees any thing as it is not ; but that His mercy will not see some things as they are. *Blessed is the man whose sin is covered*³. If we be foul, yet thou, O Saviour, art glorious. Thy righteousness beautifies us who are blemished by our own corruptions.

³ Ps. xxxii. 1.

But what? Shall our borrowed beauty blemish, the while, thine infinite justice? Shall we taint thee, to clear ourselves? Dost thou justify the wicked? Dost thou feather the raven with the wings of the dove? While the cloth is fair, is the skin nasty? Is it no more than to deck a blackamoor with white,—even with the long white robes which are the justification of saints? God forbid! Cursed be he, O Lord, that makes thy mercies unjust. No; whom thou accountest holy, thou makest so: whom thou justifiest, him thou sanctifiest. No man can be perfectly just in thee, who is not truly, though imperfectly, holy in himself.—*Sermon xvii.*

THE purchase, therefore, of our peace was paid at once; yet must be severally reckoned to every soul whom it shall benefit. If we have not a hand to take what Christ's hand doth either hold or offer, what is sufficient in Him cannot be effectual to us. The spiritual hand, whereby we apprehend the sweet offers of our Saviour, is Faith; which, in short, is no other than an affiance in the Mediator: receive peace, and be happy; believe, and thou hast received. From hence it is that we are interested in all that either God hath promised or Christ hath performed:

hence have we from God both forgiveness and love, the ground of all peace or glory : hence, of enemies, we become more than friends, sons ; and, as sons, may both expect and challenge, not only careful provision and safe protection on earth, but an everlasting patrimony above.

Behold, now, after we have sought heaven and earth, where only the wearied dove may find an olive-branch of peace. The apprehending of this all-sufficient satisfaction makes it ours : upon our satisfaction, we have remission ; upon remission, follows reconciliation ; upon our reconciliation, peace. When, therefore, thy conscience, like a stern sergeant, shall catch thee by the throat, and arrest thee upon God's debt, let thy only plea be that thou hast already paid it : bring forth that bloody acquittance, sealed to thee from heaven, upon thy true faith ; straightway, thou shalt see the fierce and terrible look of thy conscience changed into friendly smiles ; and that rough and violent hand, that was ready to drag thee to prison, shall now lovingly embrace thee, and fight for thee, against all the wrongful attempts of any spiritual adversary. O, heavenly peace, and, more than peace, friendship ; whereby alone we are leagued with ourselves, and God with us : which whoever wants, shall find a sad remem-

brancer in the midst of his dissembled jollity, and, after all vain strifes, shall fall into many secret sorrows, from which his guilty heart shall refuse to be cheered, though all the world were his minstrel!

Go then, foolish man ; and when thou feelest any check of thy sin, seek after thy jocundest companions ; deceive the time and thyself with merry purposes, with busy games ; feast away thy cares ; bury them and thyself in wine and sleep : after all these frivolous deferrings, it will return upon thee when thou wakest, perhaps ere thou wakest ; nor will be repelled, till it have showed thee thy hell ; nor, when it hath showed thee, will yet be repelled. So the stricken deer, having received a deadly arrow, whose shaft shaken out hath left the head behind it, runs from one thicket to another ; not able to change his pain with his places, but finding his wounds still the worse with continuance. Ah fool, thy soul festereth within ; and is affected so much more dangerously, by how much less it appeareth. Thou mayest wile thyself with variety ; thou canst not ease thee. Sin owes thee a spite, and will pay it thee ; perhaps, when thou art in worse case to sustain it. This flitting doth but provide for a further violence at last. I have seen a little stream of no noise, which, upon his stoppage,

hath swelled up and, with a loud gushing, hath borne over the heap of turfs wherewith it was resisted. Thy deathbed shall smart for these wilful adjournings of repentance: whereon how many have we heard raving of their old neglected sins, and fearfully despairing when they have had most need of comfort! In sum, there is no way but this; thy conscience must have either satisfaction, or torment. Discharge thy sin betimes, and be at peace.—*Heaven upon Earth*, § 6.

And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.—St. Luke ii. 16. (*Gospel.*)

O SAVIOUR, in how despicable a condition do I find thee exhibited to the world! lodged in a stable; cradled in a manger; visited by poor shepherds; employed in a homely trade; attended by mean fishermen; tempted by presumptuous devils; persecuted by the malice of envious men; exposed to hunger, thirst, nakedness, weariness, contempt! How many slaves, under the vassalage of an enemy, fare better than thou didst, from ungrateful man, whom thou camest to save! Yet, all these were but a mild and gentle preface to those thy last sufferings, wherewith thou wert pleased to shut up this scene of mortality: there

I find thee, sweating blood in thine agony ; crowned with thorns ; bleeding with scourges ; buffeted with cruel hands ; spat upon by impure mouths ; laden with thy fatal burden ; distended upon that torturing cross ; nailed to that tree of shame and curse ; reviled and insulted upon by the vilest of men ; and, at last, that no part of thy precious blood might remain unshed, pierced to the heart, by the spear of a late and impertinent malice.

Thus, thus, O God and Saviour, wouldest thou be *manifest in the flesh*⁴, that the torments of thy flesh and thy spirit might be manifested to that world, which thou camest to redeem : thus wast thou *wounded for our transgressions* ; thus wast thou *bruised for our iniquities* ; thus were *the chastisements of our peace upon thee*, and thus with *thy stripes we are healed*⁵. O blessed, but still incomprehensible, mystery of Godliness ; *God thus manifest in the flesh*, in weakness, contempt, shame, pain, death !—*The Great Mystery of Godliness*, § 3.

How should all the world blush at this indignity of Bethlehem ! He that came to save men

⁴ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

⁵ Isa. liii. 5.

is sent for his first lodging to the beasts ; the stable is become his inn, the manger his bed. O, strange cradle of that great king, which heaven itself may envy ! O Saviour, thou that wast both the maker and owner of heaven, of earth, couldst have made thee a palace without hands, couldst have commanded thee an empty room in those houses which thy creatures had made. When thou didst but bid the angels void their first place, they fell down from heaven like lightning ; and when, in thine humbled estate, thou didst but say, *I am he*⁶, who was able to stand before thee ? How easy had it been for thee, to have made place for thyself in the throngs of the stateliest courts ! Why wouldst thou be thus homely, but that, by contemning worldly glories, thou mightest teach us to condemn them ? that thou mightest sanctify poverty to them whom thou calledst unto want ? that, since thou, which hadst the choice of all earthly conditions, wouldst be born poor and despised, those, which must want out of necessity, might not think their poverty grievous ?—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book i. Con. 3.*

⁶ John xviii. 5.

The Epiphany, or Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.

The mystery of Christ.—Eph. iii. 4. (*Epistle.*)

IF thine angels, O Blessed Jesu, desired to look into this great and deep mystery of the Gospel, their longing is satisfied in the sight of thy blessed incarnation, and the full accomplishment of the great office of thy Mediatorship ; since *now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, in this wonderful work of man's redemption ; which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by thee.* But that *the unsearchable riches of Christ* should be *preached among the Gentiles*, how marvellous an accession is it to the greatness of this divine mystery of Godliness ! Of old, *In Judah was God known : his name was great in Israel. In Salem also was his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion*⁷ : but in the meanwhile, we, miserable Gentiles, sat in darkness and in the shadow

⁷ Ps. lxxvi. 1, 2.

of death ; *without God in the world* ; exposed to the displeasure of heaven ; tyrannized over by the powers of hell ; *strangers from the covenants of promise* ⁹ ; forlorn, without hope of mercy. That, therefore, O Saviour, thou vouchsafedst, in thy tender and infinite compassion, to look down from heaven upon us ; and, at the last, graciously to visit us, in the clear revelation of the saving truth of thy Gospel ; to break down the partition-wall, whereby we were excluded from any participation with thee ; to own us for thy people, and to admit us unto the fellowship of thy saints : O the wonderful mystery of Godliness, effectually manifested to us outcast Gentiles, to our conversion, to our eternal salvation !

What a *veil*, O God, was *spread over all nations* ⁹ ! a dark veil of ignorance, of error, of impiety. How did our forefathers walk in their own ways ; following the sinful lusts of their own hearts ; worshipping dumb idols ; sacrificing to all the host of heaven ; offering, not their substance only, but their sons and daughters, to devils ! It was thine own infinite goodness, that moved thee to pity our woful and desperate condition ; and to send thine eternal Son into the

⁹ Eph. ii. 12.

⁹ Isa. xxv. 7.

world to be no less a *light to lighten the Gentiles*, than to be *the glory of thy people Israel*¹.—*The Great Mystery of Godliness*, § 11.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.—Eph. iii. 8. (*Epistle*.)

THE great sheet with four corners is let down from heaven, with all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and creeping things, and fowls of the air: we may kill and eat, without any difference of clean or unclean; but even of clean meats we may surfeit². O Saviour, it is thy great mercy, that thou hast been thus long preached amongst us Gentiles; that we, in the remote ends of the world, have seen the salvation of our God: but, if we shall abuse thy graces to wantonness, and walk unanswerably to this freedom of thy Gospel, how both just and easy is it for thee to withdraw these blessings from us, and to return us to the woful condition of our old forlornness. Oh! let it not be enough, that thou art preached amongst us Gentiles, but do thou work us to a holy obedience to thy blessed Gospel; reclaim us from our abominable licentiousness of life, and from

¹ Luke ii. 32.

² Acts x. 11, 12.

our heresies of opinion ; and teach us to walk worthy of that great Salvation, which thou hast held forth unto us. So shall it be our happiness, that thou wert preached to us Gentiles ; otherwise, our condemnation shall be so much the deeper as our light hath been more clear, and our means more powerful.—*The Great Mystery of Godliness*, § 11.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews ? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.—St. Matthew ii. 1, 2. (*Gospel.*)

THOSE lights that hang low are not far seen ; but those which are high placed are equally seen in the remotest distances. Thy light, O Saviour, was no less than heavenly. The East saw that which Bethlehem might have seen. Ofttimes, those which are nearest in place are farthest off in affection. Large objects, when they are too close to the eye, do so overfill the sense that they are not discerned.

What a shame is this to Bethlehem ! The Sages came out of the East, to worship him whom that village refused.

The Bethlehemites were Jews ; the Wise Men, Gentiles. This first entertainment of Christ was a presage of the sequel. The Gentiles shall come from far to adore Christ while the Jews reject him.

Doubtless, this light was visible unto more, only they followed it, who knew that it had more than nature. He is truly wise that is wise for his own soul. If these Wise Men had been acquainted with all the other stars of heaven, and had not seen the Star of Christ, they had had but light enough to lead them into utter darkness. Philosophy, without this star, is but the wisp of error.

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.—St. Matthew ii. 3. (*Gospel.*)

WHY art thou troubled, O Herod ? A King is born ; but such a King, as whose sceptre may ever concur with lawful sovereignty ; yea, such a King, as by whom kings do hold their sceptres, not lose them. If the wise men tell thee of a King, the Star tells thee he is heavenly. Here is good cause of security ; none, of fear. The most general enmities and oppositions to good arise from mis-

takings. If men could but know how much safety and sweetness there is in all divine truth, it could receive nothing from them, but welcomes and gratulations. Misconceits have been still guilty of all wrongs and persecutions.

But if Herod were troubled, (as tyranny is still suspicious,) why was all Jerusalem troubled with him? Jerusalem, which now might hope for a relaxation of her bonds, for a recovery of her liberty and right? Jerusalem, which now only had cause to lift up her drooping head, in the joy and happiness of a Redeemer? Yet not Herod's court, but even Jerusalem was troubled. So had this miserable city been overtoiled with change, that, now they were settled in a condition quietly evil, they are troubled with the news of better. They had now got a habit of servility; and now they are so acquainted with the yoke, that the very noise of liberty, which they supposed would not come with ease, began to be unwelcome. To turn the causes of joy into sorrow argues extreme dejectedness, and a distemper of judgment, no less than desperate.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.—St. Matthew ii. 10. (*Gospel.*)

WHAT joy these sages conceived when their eyes first beheld the re-appearance of that happy Star, they only can tell, who, after a long and sad night of temptation, have seen the loving countenance of God shining forth upon their souls. If, with obedience and courage, we can follow the calling of God in difficult enterprises, we shall not want supplies of comfort. Let us not be wanting to God; we shall be sure He cannot be wanting to us.

He that led Israel by a pillar of fire into the land of promise, leads the Wise Men by a Star to the promised Seed. All His directions partake of that light, which is in Him; for *God is light*².

They fell down and worshipped him.—St. Matthew ii. 11. (*Gospel.*)

THEY which saw his Star afar off in the East, when he lay swaddled in Bethlehem, do also see his royalty further off in the despised estate of his infancy; a royalty more than human. They well

² 1 John i. 5.

knew that stars did not use to attend earthly kings; and if their aim had not been higher, what was a Jewish king to Persian strangers? Answerable therefore, hereunto, was their adoration.

Neither did they lift up empty hands to him whom they worshipped; but presented him with the most precious commodities of their country, *gold, and frankincense, and myrrh*; not as thinking to enrich him with these, but by way of homage acknowledging Him the Lord of these things. If these sages had been kings, and had offered a princely weight of gold, the blessed Virgin had not needed, in her purification, to have offered two young pigeons as the sign of her penury. As God loves not empty hands, so he measures fulness by the affection. Let it be gold, or frankincense, or myrrh, that we offer Him, it cannot but please Him who doth not use to ask how much, but how good.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book i. Con. 4.*

The First Sunday after the Epiphany.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.
— Rom. xii. 1. (*Epistle.*)

TRULY, Lord, hadst thou given us but a mere being, as thou hast done to the lowest rank of thy creatures, it had been more than thou owest us ; more than ever we could be able to requite to thy divine bounty : for every being is good ; and the least degree of good is far above our worthiness.

But, that to our being thou hast added life, it is yet a higher measure of thy mercy ; for, certainly, of thy common favours life is the most precious.

Yet this is such a benefit as may be had and not perceived ; for even the plants of the earth live and feel it not : that to our life, therefore, thou hast made a farther accession of sense, it is yet a larger improvement of thy beneficence ; for this faculty hath some power to manage life ; and makes it capable to affect those means which may

tend to the preservation of it, and to decline the contrary.

But this is no other than the brute creatures enjoy equally with us, and some of them beyond us ; that therefore, to our sense thou hast blessed us with a further addition of reason, it is yet a higher pitch of munificence : for hereby we are men ; and, as such, are able to attain some knowledge of thee, our Creator, to observe the motions of the heavens, to search into the natures of our fellow-creatures, to pass judgment upon actions and events, and to transact these earthly affairs to our own best advantage.

But, when all this is done, woe were to us, if we were but men ! for our corrupted reason renders us, of all creatures, the most miserable : that therefore, to our reason thou hast superadded faith ; to our nature, grace ; and, of men, hast made us Christians ; and to us, as such, hast given thy Christ, thy Spirit ; and thereby made us, of enemies, sons and heirs, co-heirs with Christ of thine eternal and most glorious kingdom of heaven ; yea, hast incorporated us into thyself, and made us one spirit with thee our God ; Lord, what room can there be possibly, in these strait and narrow hearts of ours, for a due admiration of thy transcendent love and mercy ?

I am swallowed up, O Lord, I am willingly swallowed up, in this bottomless abyss of thine infinite love : and there let me dwell, in a perpetual ravishment of spirit ; till, being freed from this clog of earth and filled with the fulness of Christ, I shall be admitted to enjoy that, which I cannot now reach to wonder at, thine incomprehensible bliss and glory which thou hast laid up in the highest heavens for them that love thee, in the blessed communion of all thy Saints and Angels, thy Cherubim and Seraphim, Thrones, Dominions, and Principalities, and Powers ; in the beatifical presence of thee, the ever-living God, the eternal Father of spirits, Father, Son, Holy Ghost, one infinite Deity in Three—co-essentially, co-eternally, co-equally glorious—Persons : To whom be blessing, honour, glory, and power, for ever and ever. Amen. Hallelujah.—*Meditation on the Love of Christ*, § 12.

And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem.—St. Luke ii. 43. (*Gospel.*)

I CANNOT think that the blessed Virgin or good Joseph could be so negligent of their divine charge, as not to call the child Jesus to their setting forth from Jerusalem. But their back was no sooner

turned upon the temple than His face was towards it. He had business in that place, when theirs was ended : there He was both worshipped and represented. He in whom the Godhead dwelt bodily, could do nothing without God : his true Father led him away from his supposed. Sometimes the affairs of our ordinary vocation may not grudge to yield unto spiritual occasions.

The parents of Christ knew Him well to be of a disposition not strange, nor sullen and stoical, but sweet and sociable; and therefore they supposed He had spent the time and the way in company of their friends and neighbours. They do not suspect Him wandered into the solitary fields; but when evening came, they go to seek Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. If He had not wonted to converse formerly with them, He had not now been sought amongst them. Neither as God nor man doth He take pleasure in a stern froward austerity and wild retiredness; but in a mild affableness and amiable conversation.

But, O blessed Virgin, who can express the sorrows of thy perplexed soul, when all that evening search could afford thee no news of thy son Jesus? Was not this one of those swords of Simeon, which should pierce through thy tender

breast? How didst thou chide thy credulous neglect, in not observing so precious a charge; and blame thine eyes, for once looking beside this object of thy love! How didst thou, with thy careful husband, spend that restless night, in mutual expostulations and bemoanings of your loss! How many suspicious imaginations did that while rack thy grieved spirit! Perhaps thou mightest doubt, lest they who laid wait for Him by Herod's command at his birth, had now, by the secret instigation of Archelaus, surprised Him in his childhood: or, it may be, thou thoughtest thy divine son had now withdrawn himself from the earth, and returned to his heavenly glory, without warning: or, peradventure, thou studiest with thyself, whether any carelessness on thy behalf had not given occasion to this absence.

O, dear Saviour, who can miss, and not mourn for, thee? Never any soul conceived thee by faith that was less afflicted with the sense of thy desertion than comforted with the joy of thy presence! Just is that sorrow, and those tears seasonable, that are bestowed upon thy loss. What comfort are we capable of, while we want thee? What relish is there in these earthly delights, without thee? What is there to mitigate our passionate

discomforts, if not from thee?—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book ii. Con. 1.*

And his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us! behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.—St. Luke ii. 48. (*Gospel.*)

O SAVIOUR, never any loved thee whom thou dost not sometimes exercise with the grief of missing thee; that both we may be more careful to hold thee, and more joyful in recovering thee. Thou hast said, and canst not lie, *I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*⁴; but, even while thou art really present, thou thinkest good to be absent unto our apprehensions.

Yet, if thou leave us, thou wilt not forsake us; if thou leave us for our humiliation, thou wilt not forsake us to our final discomfort. Thou mayest for three days hide thyself, but then we shall find thee in the temple. None ever sought thee with a sincere desire, of whom thou wert not found. Thou wilt not be, either so little absent as not to whet our appetites, nor so long as to fainten the heart.

After three days, we shall find thee; and where should we rather hope to find thee, than in the

⁴ Mat. xxviii. 20.

Temple? There is the habitation for the God of Israel; there is thy resting place for ever. O all ye that are grieved with the want of your Saviour, see where you must seek Him. In vain shall ye hope to find Him in the streets, in the taverns, in the theatres; seek Him in his holy Temple; seek Him with piety; seek Him with faith; there shall ye meet Him, there shall ye recover Him. — *Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book ii. Con. 1.*

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany.

He that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.—Rom. xii. 8.
(*Epistle.*)

THE more universal a man's beneficence is, so much is it more commendable; and comes so much nearer to the bounty of that great God, who *openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing*¹. There are too many selfish men, whose spirits, as in a close retort, are cooped up within the compass of their own concerns; whose

¹ See Ps. cxlv. 16.

narrow hearts think they are born for none but themselves : others, that would seem good-natured men, are willing enough to enlarge themselves to their kindred ; whom they are careful to advance, with neglect of all others, however deserving ; some, yet more liberal-minded, can be content to be kind and open-handed to their neighbours ; and some, perhaps, reach so far as to profess a readiness to do all good offices to their countrymen ; but here their largeness finds its utmost bounds. All these dispositions are but enclosures : give me the open champaign of a general and unlimited benefacture. Is the good man rich ? he scatters his seed abroad, by whole handfuls, over the whole ridge ; and doth not drop it down between his fingers into the several furrows : his bread is cast upon the waters also. Is he knowing and learned ? he smothers not his skill in his bosom, but freely lays it out upon the common stock ; not so much regarding his private contentment, as the public proficiency. Is he deeply wise ? he is ready to improve all his cares and counsels to the advancement and preservation of peace, justice, and good order amongst men. Now, although it is not in the power of any but persons placed in the highest orb of authority actually to oblige the world to them, yet nothing

hinders but that men of meaner rank may have the will to be thus universally beneficent, and may, in preparation of mind, be zealously affected to lay themselves forth upon the common good. O Lord, if thou hast given me but a private and shorthand, yet give me a large and public heart!—*Soliloquies*, xxviii.

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called and his disciples, to the marriage.—St. John ii. 1, 2. (*Gospel*.)

HE that made the first marriage in Paradise bestows His first miracle upon a Galilean marriage. He that was the author of matrimony, and sanctified it, doth, by His holy presence, honour the resemblance of his eternal union with his Church.

Happy is that wedding where Christ is a guest! O Saviour, those that marry in thee cannot marry without thee. There is no holy marriage, whereat thou art not, however invisible, yet truly present by thy Spirit, by thy gracious benediction. Thou makest marriages in heaven, thou blessest them from heaven. O thou, that hast betrothed us to thyself in truth and righteousness, do thou con-

summate that happy marriage of ours in the highest heavens !

When they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. How well doth it beseem the eyes of piety and Christian love to look into the necessities of others !

Whether we want bread, or water, or wine, necessities or comforts, whither should we run, O Saviour, but to that infinite munificence of thine which neither denieth nor upbraideth any thing ? We cannot want, we cannot abound, but from thee. Give us what Thou wilt, so thou give us contentment with what thou givest !

O blessed Virgin, if, in that heavenly glory wherein thou art, thou canst take notice of these earthly things, with what indignation dost thou look upon the presumptuous superstition of vain men, whose suits make thee more than a solicitor of divine favours ! Thy humanity is not lost in thy motherhood nor in thy glory. The respects of nature reach not so high as heaven. It is far from thee, to abide that honour, which is stolen from thy Redeemer.

There is a marriage, whereto we are invited ;

yea, wherein we are already interested, not as the guests only, but as the bride; in which there shall be no want of the wine of gladness. It is marvel if, in these earthly banquets, there be not some lack. *In thy presence, O Saviour, is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore⁶. Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb⁷.*

Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. How well doth it beseem the mother of Christ, to agree with his Father in Heaven, whose voice from Heaven said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him⁸*. She that said of herself, *Be it unto me according to thy word⁹*, says unto others, *Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.* This is the way to have miracles wrought in us, —obedience to his word.

The power of Christ did not stand upon their officiousness. He could have wrought wonders in spite of them; but their perverse refusal of his commands might have made them incapable of the favour of a miraculous action. He that can, when He will, convince the obstinate, will not grace the

⁶ Ps. xvi. 11.

⁸ Mat. xvii. 5.

⁷ Rev. xix. 9.

⁹ Luke i. 38.

disobedient. He that could work without us, or against us, will not work for us but by us.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book ii. Con. 5.*

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves ; but rather give place unto wrath : for it is written, Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord.—Rom. xii. 19. (*Epistle.*)

How sweet a thing is revenge to us, naturally ! Even the very infant rejoices to see him beaten that hath angered him ; and is ready, with his little hand, to give that stroke to the bystander which he would have with more force returned to the offender : and how many have we known, in mortal quarrels, cheerfully bleeding out their last drop, when they have seen their enemy gasping and dying before them ! This alone shews how much there is remaining in our bosom of the sting of that old serpent, who was a *murderer from the beginning*¹, delighting in death, and enjoying our

¹ John viii. 44.

torment : whereas, on the contrary, true grace is merciful, ready to forgive, apt to return good for evil, to pray for our persecutors. Nothing doth more clearly evince what spirit we are of than our disposition in wrongs received : the carnal heart breathes nothing but revenge ; and is straight wringing the sword out of the hands of Him that hath said *vengeance is mine* : the regenerate soul, contrarily, gives place to wrath, and puts on *bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another*², and will not be overcome of evil, but overcomes evil with good. We have so much of God, as we can remit injuries ; so much of Satan, as we would revenge them.—*Select Thoughts*, 50.

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.—St. Matthew viii. 5, 6. (*Gospel*.)

WHY didst thou not, O centurion, rather bring thy servant to Christ for cure, than sue for him absent ? There was a paralytic, whom faith and charity brought to our Saviour, and let down

² Col. iii. 12, 13.

through the uncovered roof in his bed ; why was not thine so carried, so presented ? Was it out of the strength of thy faith, which assured thee, thou needest not shew thy servant to Him, that saw all things ? One and the same grace may yield contrary effects. They, because they believed, brought the patient to Christ ; thou broughtest not thine to Him, because thou believedst. Their act argued no less desire ; thine, more confidence. Thy labour was less, because thy faith was more.

Oh that I could thus come to my Saviour ; and make such moan to him for myself, " Lord, my soul is sick of unbelief, sick of self-love, sick of inordinate desires." I should not need to say more. Thy mercy, O Saviour, would not then stay by for my suit, but would prevent me, as here, with a gracious engagement, *I will come and heal thee.*

Even so, O Saviour, that which thou offeredst to do for the centurion's servant hast thou done for us. We were sick unto death ; so far had the dead palsy of sin overtaken us, that there was no life of grace left in us : when thou wast not content to sit still in heaven, and say, " I will cure them ;" but addedst also, " I will come and cure them." Thyself camest down accordingly to this

miserable world, and hast personally healed us ; so as now we shall not die, but live, and declare thy works, O Lord. And oh that we could enough praise that love and mercy which hath so graciously abased thee ; and could be but so low dejected before thee as thou hast stooped low unto us ; that we could be but as lowly subjects of thy goodness, as we are unworthy !

O admirable return of humility ! Christ will go down to visit the sick servant. The master of that servant says, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof.*

While he confessed himself unworthy of any favour, he approved himself worthy of all. Had not Christ been before in his heart, he could not have thought himself unworthy to entertain that guest within his house. Under the low roof of an humble breast doth God ever delight to dwell.

It is fit the foundations should be laid deep, when the building is high. The centurion's humility was not more low than his faith was lofty : that reaches up into heaven ; and, in the face of human weakness, describes omnipotence, *Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.*

Had the centurion's roof been heaven itself, it

could not have been worthy to be come under of Him, whose word was almighty and who was the Almighty Word of his Father. Such is Christ confessed by him, that says, *Speak the word only*. None but a divine power is unlimited : neither hath faith any other bounds than God himself. There needs no footing to remove mountains or devils, but a word.

Do but say the word, O Saviour, my sin shall be remitted, my soul shall be healed, my body shall be raised from dust, both soul and body shall be glorious !

What can be more marvellous than to see Christ marvel ? All marvelling supposes an ignorance going before, and a knowledge following, some accident unexpected : now, who wrought this faith in the Centurion but He, that wondered at it ? He knew well what he wrought, because He wrought what he would ; yet He wondered at what he both wrought and knew,—to teach us much more to admire that which He at once knows and holds admirable. He wrought this faith as God : he wondered at it as man. God wrought, and man admired. He, that was both, did both, to teach us where to bestow our wonder. I never find Christ wondering at gold or silver,

at the costly and curious works of human skill or industry ;—yea, when the disciples wondered at the magnificence of the Temple, he rebuked them rather. I find Him not wondering at the frame of heaven and earth, nor at the orderly disposition of all creatures and events : the familiarity of these things intercepts the admiration. But, when He sees the grace or acts of faith, He so approves them, that He is ravished with wonder. He that rejoiced in the view of his creation, to see that of nothing He had made all things good, rejoices no less in the reformation of his creatures, to see that He had made good of evil.

If the prayers of an earthly master prevailed so much with the Son of God for the recovery of a servant, how shall the intercession of the Son of God prevail with his Father in Heaven for us, that are his impotent children and servants upon earth ! What can we want, O Saviour, while thou suest for us ? He that hath given thee for us, can deny thee nothing for us, can deny us nothing for thee. In thee we are happy and shall be glorious. To thee, O thou mighty Redeemer of Israel, with thine eternal Father, together with thy blessed Spirit, one God, infinite and incomprehensible, be given all praise, honour, and glory, for

ever and ever. Amen.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book ii. Con. 6.*

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

Render therefore to all their dues : tribute to whom tribute is due ; custom to whom custom ; fear to whom fear ; honour to whom honour.—Rom. xiii. 7. (*Epistle.*)

FIRST, let God have His own ; His own days, His own services, His fear, His love, His all. Let religion lead all our projects, not follow them. Let our lives be led in a conscientious obedience to all the laws of our maker. Far be all blasphemies, curses, and obscenities, from our tongues ; all outrages and violences from our hands ; all presumptuous and rebellious thoughts from our hearts. Let our hearts and hands, tongues, lives, bodies and souls be sincerely devoted to Him.

Then, for men ; let us give Cæsar his own : tribute, fear, subjection, loyalty ; and if he need, our lives. Let the nobility have honour, obeisance, observation. Let the clergy have their dues, and our reverence. Let the commons have truth, love, fidelity in all their transactions. Let there

be *just balances, just weights* ³. Let there be no grinding of faces, no *treading upon the poor* ⁴, no swallowing of widows' houses, no force, no fraud, no perjury, no perfidiousness.

Finally, for ourselves; let every man *possess his vessel in sanctification and honour* ⁵; framing himself to all Christian and heavenly temper, in all wisdom, sobriety, chastity, meekness, constancy, moderation, patience, and sweet contentation.

So shall the work of our righteousness be peace of heart, peace of state; private and public peace; peace with ourselves, peace with the world, peace with God; temporal peace here, eternal peace and glory above:—unto the fruition whereof, He, who hath ordained us, mercifully bring us, for the sake of Him who is the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ the righteous.—*Sermon xiii.*

So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go.—St. Matthew viii. 31, 32. (*Gospel.*)

Not long before had our Saviour commanded

³ Lev. xix. 36.

⁴ Amos v. 11.

⁵ 1 Thess. iv. 4.

the winds and waters, and they could not but obey Him : now he speaks in the same language to the evil Spirit : he entreats not, he persuades not, he commands. Command argues superiority. He only is infinitely stronger than the strong one in possession. Else, where powers are matched, though with some inequality, they tug for the victory ; and, without resistance, yield nothing.

What need we to fear, while we are under so omnipotent a commander ? *The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea* ⁶. Let those principalities and powers do their worst : those mighty adversaries are under the command of Him who loved us so well as to bleed for us. What can we now doubt of ? His power, or His will ? How can we profess him a God, and doubt of his power ? How can we profess him a Saviour, and doubt of his will ? He both can and will command those infernal powers. We are no less safe, than they are malicious.

Behold the same name given to Christ by the devil, which was formerly given him by the Angel ;

⁶ Pa. xciii. 4.

*Thou shalt call his name Jesus*⁷. That awful name, whereat every knee shall bow, in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, is called upon by this prostrate devil.

Fond hypocrite, that pleasest thyself in talking well, hear this devil ; and when thou canst speak better than he, look to fare better : but, in the mean time, know that a smooth tongue, and a foul heart, carries away double judgments.

Let curious heads dispute, whether the devil knew Christ to be God. In this I dare believe himself, though in nothing else : he knew what he believed ; what he believed, that he confessed, *Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God*⁸ ; to the confusion of those semi-christians, that have either held doubtfully, or ignorantly unknown, or blasphemously denied, what the very devils have professed. How little can a bare speculation avail us, in these cases of divinity ! So far, this devil hath attained ; to no ease, no comfort. *Knowledge alone puffeth up*, it is our *charity* that *edifieth*⁹. If there be not a sense of our sure interest in this Jesus, a power to apply his merits

⁷ Mat. i. 21.⁸ Mark v. 7.⁹ 1 Cor. viii. 1.

and obedience, we are no whit the safer, no whit the better; only we are so much the wiser, to understand who shall condemn us.

He that had humility enough to kneel to the Son of God, hath boldness enough to expostulate, *Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* Whether it were, that Satan, who useth to enjoy the torment of sinners, whose music it is to hear our shrieks and gnashings, held it no small piece of his torment, to be restrained in the exercise of his tyranny; or, whether the very presence of Christ were his rack, for the guilty spirit projecteth terrible things, and cannot behold the judge or the executioner without a renovation of horror; or, whether that, as himself professeth, he were now in a fearful expectation of being commanded down into the deep, for a further degree of actual torment, which he thus deprecates.

There is no time wherein the evil spirits are not tormented; there is a time wherein they expect to be tormented yet more: *Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* They knew that the last Assizes are the prefixed term of their full execution; which they also understood to be not yet come. For though they knew not when

the Day of Judgment should be, (a point concealed from the glorious angels of heaven,) yet they knew when it should not be; and therefore they say *Before the time*. Even the very evil spirits confess, and fearfully attend, a set day of universal Sessions. They believe less than devils, who either doubt of or deny that Day of final retribution.

So doth this evil Spirit expostulate that he sues; *I beseech thee torment me not*¹. The word is well changed since Satan's first onset upon Christ. Then he could say, *If thou be the Son of God*²; now, *Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God*: then, *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me*³; now, *I beseech thee torment me not*. The same power when he lists can change the note of the tempter to us. How happy are we that have such a Redeemer as can command the devils to their chains! Oh, consider this, ye lawless sinners that have said *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us*⁴. However the Almighty suffers you, for a judgment, to have free scope to

¹ Luke viii. 28.² Mat. iv. 9.³ Mat. iv. 6.⁴ Ps. ii. 3.

evil, and ye can now impotently resist the revealed will of your Creator; yet the time shall come, when ye shall see the very masters whom ye have served, the powers of darkness, unable to avoid the revenges of God. How much less shall man strive with his Maker! man, whose breath is in his nostrils, whose house is clay, whose foundation is the dust!

The worst of all creatures hates punishment, and can say, "Lead me not into pain;" only the good heart can say, *Lead us not into temptation*⁵. If we can as heartily pray against sin, for the avoiding of displeasure, as against punishment, when we have displeased, then is true grace in the soul. Indeed, if we could fervently pray against sin, we should not need to pray against punishment, which is no other than the inseparable shadow of that body; but if we have not laboured against our sins, in vain do we pray against punishment. God must be just; and *the wages of sin is death*⁶.

Sometimes, it pleaseth God to grant the suits of wicked men and spirits, in no favour to the

⁵ Mat. vi. 13.

⁶ Rom. vi. 23.

suitors. He grants an ill suit, and withholds a good : he grants an ill suit in judgment ; and holds back a good one in mercy. The Israelites ask meat ; he gives quails to their mouths, and leanness to their souls. The chosen vessel wishes Satan taken off, and hears only *My grace is sufficient for thee*⁷. We may not evermore measure favours by condescension. These devils doubtless receive more punishment for that harmful act, wherein they are heard. If we ask what is either unfit to receive or unlawful to beg, it is a great favour of our God to be denied.

Those spirits which would go into the swine by permission, go out of the man by command : they had stayed long, and are ejected suddenly. The immediate works of God are perfect in an instant, and do not require the aid of time for their maturation.

No sooner are they cast out of the man than they are in the swine. They will lose no time, but pass, without intermission, from one mischief to another. If they hold it a pain not to be doing evil, why is it not our delight to be ever doing good ?

These Gadarenes should have argued, " This

⁷ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

man hath power over men, beasts, devils; it is good to have him as our friend; his presence is our safety and protection." Now they contrarily misinfer, "Thus powerful is he; it is good he were further off."—What miserable and pernicious misconstructions do men make of God; of divine attributes and actions! "God is omnipotent, able to take infinite vengeance of sin; oh that he were not! He is provident; I may be careless: he is merciful; I may sin: he is holy, let him depart from me, for I am a sinful man." How witty sophisters are natural men, to deceive their own souls, to rob themselves of a God! O Saviour, how worthy are they to want thee, that wish to be rid of thee! Thou hast just cause to be weary of us, even while we sue to hold thee; but, when once our wretched unthankfulness grows weary of thee, who can pity us if we be punished with thy departure?—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iii. Con. 5.*

The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.

Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body.—Col. iii. 15. (*Epistle.*)

WOULD we find the bed of our sickness and death comforted with the sweet testimony of a heavenly peace betwixt God and our souls? See whence we must fetch it. If ever we have it, we must have it from the blessed ordinances of God, his word and sacraments. In vain shall ye seek for this, dear Christians, in a licentious tavern, in a rich counting-house, in chambers of dalliance, in full tables, in pompous courts; no, not in thrones of earthly majesty. Alas, many of these are the make-bates betwixt heaven and us. Most of them can mar, none of them can make, our peace. It is only the despised ministry of the Gospel,—the word of Reconciliation, as it is called, 2 Cor. v. 19,—that can do it. As ye love your souls, therefore, as you would find peace at the last, and would look with a comfortable assurance in the face of death and judgment: as ye would see a gracious mercy-seat, in the dreadful Tribunal of God, at the day of our last appear-

ance,—frequent the house of God,—attend reverently and conscientiously upon the sacred institutions of God,—yield yourselves over to be wrought upon by the powerful Gospel of Jesus Christ. Oh, be not you wanting unto God ; he will not be wanting unto you.—*Sermon xi.*

Gather the wheat into my barn.—St. Matthew xiii. 30.
(*Gospel.*)

CANST thou apprehend thyself now approaching to the glory of the heaven of heavens, a place and state of so infinite contentment and happiness, and not be ecstasied with joy ?

There, there shalt thou, O my soul, enjoy a perfect rest from all thy toils, cares, fears ; there shalt thou find a true, vital life, free from all the incumbrances of thy miserable pilgrimage ; free from all the dangers of either sins or temptations ; free from all anxiety and distraction ; free from all sorrow, pain, perturbation ; free from all the possibility of change or death ; a life, wherein there is nothing but pure and perfect pleasure ; nothing but perpetual melody of angels and saints, singing sweet hallelujahs to their God ; a life, which the most glorious Deity both gives and is : a life, wherein thou hast the full fruition of the

ever-blessed Godhead, the continual society of the celestial spirits, the blissful presence of the glorified humanity of thy dear Saviour : a life, wherein thou hast ever consort with the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the patriarchs and prophets, the noble army of martyrs and confessors, the celestial synod of all the holy fathers and illuminated doctors of the Church ; shortly, the blessed assembly of all the faithful professors of the name of the Lord Jesus, who, having finished their course, sit now shining in their promised glory. See there that yet unapproachable light, that divine magnificence of the heavenly King : see that resplendent crown of righteousness, which decks the heads of each of those saints, and is ready to be set on thine, when thou hast happily overcome those spiritual powers wherewith thou art still conflicting : see the joyful triumphs of these exulting victors : see the measures of their glory different, yet all full, and the least unmeasurable : lastly, see all this happiness not limited to thousands, nor yet millions, of years, but commensured by no less than eternity.

And now, my soul, if thou have received the infallible engagement of thy God, in that, having believed, thou art sealed with that Holy Spirit of

promise, which is the earnest of thine inheritance, until the full redemption of thy purchased possession⁸; if through his infinite mercy, thou be now upon the entering into that blessed place and state of immortality: forbear, if thou canst, to be raised above thyself with the *joy of the Holy Ghost*⁹,—to be enlarged towards thy God, with a joy unspeakable and glorious. See if thou canst now breathe forth any thing but praises to thy God, and songs of rejoicing: bearing evermore a part in that heavenly song, *Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever*¹.—*The Soul's Farewell to Earth*, § 12.

⁸ Eph. i. 13, 14.

⁹ 1 Thess. i. 6.

¹ Rev. vii. 12.

The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.—
1 St. John iii. 1. (*Epistle.*)

SEEST thou, O sinful man, nothing at all in God's face, but frowns and fury? Doth every beam of his angry eye dart vengeance into thy soul, so as thou wouldest fain run away from his presence, and woorest the rocks and mountains to fall upon thee, and hide thee from the sight of that dreadful countenance? Cleanse thy hands: purge thy heart: clear thine eyes, with the tears of true contrition: and then, look up; and tell me, whether thou dost not see a happy change of aspect; whether thou canst now discern ought in that face, but a glorious loveliness, fatherly indulgence, inconceivable mercy; such as shall ravish thy soul with a divine love, with a joy unspeakable and glorious.—*The Remedy of Profaneness.*

Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not : whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.—1 St. John iii. 6. (*Epistle.*)

It is one thing for a man to walk on willingly in a beaten path of sin ; another thing, for a man to be jostled out of the way of righteousness by the violence of a temptation, which he soon recovers again by a sound repentance. The best cannot but be overtaken with sin ; but, *whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin*. He may be transported whither he meant not ; but he makes not a trade of doing ill : his heart is against that, which his hand is drawn unto ; and if, in this inward strife, he be overpowered, he lies not down in a willing yieldance, but struggles up again, and, with a resumed courage and indignation, tramples on that which formerly supplanted him.—*The Balm of Gilead*, § 5.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.—1 St. John iii. 8. (*Epistle.*)

THIS act is for no hand but His. When a strong man keeps possession, none but a stronger can remove him. In voluntary things, the strongest

may yield to the weakest, Samson to a Delilah ; but in violent, ever the mightiest carries it. A spiritual nature must needs be in rank above a bodily : neither can any power be above a spirit, but the God of spirits.

No otherwise is it in the mental possession. Wherever sin is, there Satan is ; as on the contrary, *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin ; for his seed remaineth in him.* That evil One not only is, but rules, in the sons of disobedience. In vain shall we try to eject him, but by the Divine power of the Redeemer : *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* Do we find ourselves haunted with the familiar devils of pride, self-love, sensual desires, unbelief ? None, but thou, O Son of the ever-living God, can free our bosoms of these hellish guests ! *Cleanse thou me from my secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins ; let them not have dominion over me*². O Saviour, it is no paradox to say that thou castest out more devils now, than thou didst while thou wert upon earth.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iii. Con. 8.*

² Ps. xix. 12, 13.

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.—St. Matthew xxiv. 23. (*Gospel.*)

SOME, vainly imagining the reign of the saints already begun, cast off Scriptures and ordinances as utterly useless; and please themselves in a conceited fruition of their happy kingdom, and an immediate conversation with the King of Glory. Others, construing all mutations which befall the Church as either the harbingers or several stages of their Saviour's approach to His new Kingdom and theirs, applaud themselves in their imminent and already descried glory; rejoicing to tell us how far he is on his way: and, lest we should appeal to our own eyes in so important a case, tell us that this object is not for our discerning, but for qualified persons only; men, not like the ordinary sort of professors, who are of a low, poor, pusillanimous spirit, but for such only as are deeply engaged in the Church's cause, and sharers in her troubles and sorrows.

For my part, I am persuaded in my soul that the coming of our Saviour is near at hand: and that, before that great day, God hath decreed and will yet effect a more happy and flourishing condition of his Church here on earth, than we yet

see ; which I do humbly pray for, and hopefully expect ; ambitiously suing to my God that my poor endeavours might be thought worthy to contribute any thing to so blessed a purpose. But for the particularities of the time and manner, I both have learned, and do teach, silence. And, if any man think he hath sufficient intimation of either or both of these in the words of Holy Scripture : yet, since those clauses are involved in some obscurity, and may afford multiplicity of sense, my desire and whole drift is, to beseech him to suspend his judgment concerning these so deep and intricate doctrines till God shall be pleased to clear them by apparent events ; and in the mean time to rest contented with those evident and unquestionable truths of the Gospel, which the Church of Christ hath hitherto unanimously taught and maintained ; wherein he shall do that, which may happily conduce both to the Church's peace and his own.—*Preface to the Revelation Unrevealed.*

Septuagesima Sunday.

I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection ; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.—1 Cor. ix. 27. (*Epistle.*)

BODILY *exercise*, saith the Apostle, *profiteth little*³ ; little sure, in respect of any worth that it hath in itself, or any thank that it can expect from the Almighty. For, what is it to that good and great God, whether I be full or fasting ; whether I wake or sleep ; whether my skin be smooth or rough, ruddy or pale, white or discoloured ; whether my hand be hard with labour or soft with ease ; whether my bed be hard or yielding ; whether my diet be coarse or delicate ? But, though in itself it avail little, yet so it may be, and hath been, and ought to be, improved, as that it may be found exceedingly beneficial to the soul ; else the same Apostle would not have said, *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection ; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.* In all the

³ 1 Tim. iv. 8.

records of history, whom do we find more noted for holiness than those who have been most austere in the restraints of bodily pleasures and contentments? In the mount of Tabor, who should meet with our Saviour in his transfiguration, but those two eminent saints, which had fasted an equal number of days with himself? And our experience tells us that what is detracted from the body is added to the soul: for the flesh and spirit are not more partners than enemies; one gains by the other's loss, the pampering of the flesh is the starving of the soul. I find an unavoidable emulation between these two parts of myself: O God, teach me to hold an equal hand betwixt them both; let me so use them, as holding the one my favourite, the other my drudge; not so humouring the worse part as to discontent the better; nor so wholly regarding the better as altogether to discourage the worse. Both are thine; both by gift, and purchase: enable thou me to give each of them their dues; so as the one may be fitted, with all humble obsequiousness, to serve; the other, to rule and command, with all just authority and moderation.—*Soliloquies*, xxiii.

Why stand ye here all the day idle !—St. Matthew xx. 6.
(*Gospel.*)

THE great and wise God, that hath been pleased to give to all creatures their life and being without their endeavour or knowledge, hath yet ordained not to continue their being without their own labour and co-operation : so as he hath imposed upon them all a necessity of painstaking for their own preservation. The wild beasts of the desert must walk abroad, and forage far for their prey : the beasts of the field must earn their pasture, with their work and labour in very feeding to fill a large stomach, with picking up those several mouthfuls, whereby they are sustained : the fowls of several kinds must fly abroad, to seek their various diet,—some in the hedges, some in the fields, some in the waters ; the bee must, with unwearied industry, gather her stock of wax and honey out of a thousand flowers. Neither know I any that can be idle, and live. But man, as he is appointed to be the lord of all the rest, so he is, in a special manner, born to labour ; as he upon whom the charge lies to provide both for himself and all the creatures under his command : being not more impotent than they, in his first entrance into the

world, than he is, afterwards, by the power of his reason, more able to govern them, and to order all things that may concern both their use and conservation. How willingly, O Lord, should I stoop to this just condition of my creation ! Labour is my destiny ; and labour shall be my trade. Something I must always do, both out of thy command, and my own inclination ; as one, whose not unactive spirit abhors nothing more than the torment of doing nothing. O God, do thou direct me to, and employ me in, those services that may be most for thy glory, for the good of others, and my own discharge and comfort !—*Soliloquies, xxxi.*

Sexagesima Sunday.

If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.—2 Cor. xi. 30. (*Epistle.*)

It doth not a little blunt the edge of evils, to consider that they come from a divine hand, whose almighty power is guided by a most wise providence, and tempered with a fatherly love. Even the savage creatures will be smitten by their keepers and repine not ; if by a stranger, they

will tear him in pieces. He strikes me that made me, that moderates the world: why struggle I with him; why, with myself? Am I a fool, or a rebel? A fool if I be ignorant whence my crosses come; a rebel if I know it and be impatient. My sufferings are from a God; from my God: he hath destined me every dram of sorrow that I feel: "Thus much thou shalt abide; and here shall thy miseries be stinted." All worldly helps cannot abate them: all powers of hell cannot add one scruple to their weight that he hath allotted me: I must, therefore, either blaspheme God in my heart, detracting from his infinite justice, wisdom, power, mercy, which all stand inviolable, when millions of such worms as I am are gone to dust; or else confess that I ought to be patient. And, if I profess I should be that I will not, I befool myself; and bewray miserable impotency. But, as impatience is full of excuse, it was thine own rash improvidence, or the spite of thine enemy, that impoverished, that defamed thee: it was the malignity of some unwholesome dish, or some gross corrupted air, that hath dis-tempered thee. Ah, foolish cur, why dost thou bite at the stone, which could never have hurt thee but from the hand that threw it? If I wound thee, what matters it, whether with mine

own sword, or thine, or another's? God strikes some immediately from heaven, with his own arm, or with the arm of angels; others, he buffets with their own hands: some, by the revenging sword of an enemy; others, with the fist of his dumb creatures: God strikes in all, his hand moves theirs. If thou see it not, blame thy carnal eyes. Why dost thou find fault with the instrument, while thou knowest the agent? Even the dying thief pardons the executioner; exclaims on his unjust judge, or his malicious accusers. Either, then, blame the first mover, or discharge the means; which, as they could not have touched thee but as from him; so from him they have afflicted thee justly, wrongfully perhaps as in themselves.—*Heaven upon Earth*, § 12.

Choked. . . . with riches.—St. Luke viii. 14. (*Gospel*.)

I HEAR Peter and John, the eldest and dearest Apostles, say, *Silver and gold have I none*⁴;—I hear the devil say, *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me*⁵. Whether shall I desire to be in the state of these saints or of that devil?—He was, therefore, a better husband⁶ than philosopher who first

⁴ Acts iii. 6.

⁵ Mat. iv. 9.

⁶ *Husband*, manager.

termed riches Goods : and he mended the title well, who, adding a fit epithet, called them Goods of Fortune ; false goods ascribed to a false patron. There is no Fortune, to give or guide riches ; there is no true goodness in riches to be guided. His meaning then was, as I can interpret it, to teach us, by this title, that it is a chance if ever riches were good to any. In sum, who would account those as riches, or those riches as goods, which hurt the owner, disquiet others ; which the worst have, which the best have not ; which those that have not want not, which those want that have them ; which are lost in a night, and a man is not worse when he hath lost them ? It is true of them, as we say of fire and water, that they are good servants, ill masters. Make them thy slaves, they shall be goods indeed ; in use, if not in nature ; good to thyself, good to others by thee. But, if they be thy masters, thou hast condemned thyself to thine own galleys. If a servant rule, he proves a tyrant. What madness is this ! Thou hast made thyself at once a slave and a fool. What if thy chains be of gold ? Or if, with Heliogabalus, thou hast made thee silken halters ? Thy servitude may be glorious ; it is no less miserable.—*Heaven upon Earth*, § 18.

Quinquagesima Sunday.

Now we see through a glass darkly ; but then face to face.
—1 Cor. xiii. 12. (*Epistle.*)

O MY God, I shall not be worthy of my eyes, if I think I can employ them better than in looking up to thy heaven : and I shall not be worthy to look up to heaven, if I suffer my eyes to rest there, and not look through heaven at thee, the Almighty Maker and Ruler of it ; who dwellest there in all glory and majesty ; and if, seeing thee, I do not always adore thee and find my soul taken up with awful and admiring thoughts concerning thee. I see many eyes have looked curiously upon that glorious frame, else they could not have made so punctual observation of the fire and motion of those goodly globes of light, which thou hast placed there, as to foretel all their conjunctions and oppositions for many hundred years before : but while they look at the motions, let me look at the mover ; wondering, not without ravishment of spirit, at that infinite power and wisdom which keeps up those numberless and immense bodies in so perfect a regularity that they all keep

their just stations and times, without the least varying from the course which thou settedst them in their first creation ; so, while their observation makes them the wiser, mine shall make me the holier. Great variety of objects hast thou given us here below, which do commonly take up our eyes ; but it shall be my fault if all those do not rather lead my thoughts to thee than withdraw them from thee : since thy power and majesty are clearly conspicuous in them all. O God, while I have eyes, let me never but see thee in all things, let me never but enjoy thee : let me see thee as thou mayest be seen by the eye of faith, till I may see, as I am seen, hereafter, in glory : let me see thee as through a glass darkly here on earth, till I come to see thee face to face in heaven.—*Soliloquies*, i.

Then face to face.—1 Cor. xiii. 12. (*Epistle.*)

CANST thou believe this, O my soul, and yet recoil at the thought of thy departure? Wert thou appointed, after a painful dissolution, to spend some hundreds of years at the foregates of glory, though in a painless expectation of a late happiness, even this hope were a pain alone : but if sense of pain were also added to the delay, this

were more than enough to make the condition justly dreadful. But, now that one minute shuts our eyes and opens them to a clear sight of God,—determines our misery and begins our blessedness,—oh, the cowardice of our unbelief if we shrink at so momentary a purchase of eternity ! How many have we known that, for a false reputation of honour, have rushed into the jaws of death, when we are sure they could not come back to enjoy it ; and do I tremble at a minute's pain, that shall feoff me in that glory, which I cannot but for ever enjoy ? How am I ashamed to hear a heathen Socrates encouraging himself against the fears of death from his resolution of meeting with some famous persons in that other world, and to feel myself shrugging at a short brunt of pain that shall put me into the bliss-making presence of the all-glorious God, into the sight of the glorified Humanity of my dear Redeemer, into the society of all the Angels and Saints of Heaven !—*The Invisible World*, Book ii. § 2.

Now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known.—1 Cor. xiii. 12. (*Epistle.*)

Know thyself, therefore, O man ; and know thy Maker. God hath not put into thee a dark

soul, nor shut up thy inward powers, in a dungeon of comfortless obscurity : but he hath set up a bright shining lamp in thy breast, whereby thou mayest sufficiently discern natural and moral truths, the principles and conclusions whether of nature or art ; herein advancing thee above all other visible creatures, whom he hath confined, at the best, to a mere opacity of outward and common sense. But if our natural light shall, through the blessing of God, be so happily improved, as freely to give place to the spiritual, reason to faith ; so that the soul can now attain to see him that is invisible, and in his light to see light⁷, now even while it is overshadowed with the interposition of this earth, it is already entered within the verge of glory : but as soon as this veil of wretched mortality is done away, it enjoys a clear heaven for ever, and sees as it is seen.—*The Invisible World*, Book ii. § 2.

A certain blind man sat by the way side begging.—St. Luke xviii. 35. (*Gospel.*)

How much am I bound to God that hath given me eyes to see this man's want of eyes ! With what suspicion and fear he walks ! How doth

⁷ See Ps. xxxvi. 9.

his hand and staff examine his way ! With what jealousy doth he receive every morsel, every draught ; and yet meets with many a post, and stumbles at many a stone, and swallows many a fly ! To him the world is as if it were not ; or as if it were all rubs, and snares, and downfalls ; and if any man will lend him a hand, he must trust to his, however faithless, guide ; without all comfort, save this, that he cannot see himself miscarry.

Many a one is thus spiritually blind ; and, because he is so, discerns it not ; and, not discerning, complains not of so woful a condition. *The god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not*^s. They walk on in the ways of death, and yield themselves over to the guidance of him who seeks for nothing but their precipitation into hell. It is an addition to the misery of this inward occecation, that it is ever joined with a secure confidence in them whose trade and ambition is to betray their souls.

Whatever becomes of these outward senses, which are common to me with the meanest and most despicable creatures, O Lord, give me not over to that spiritual darkness which is incident to none but those that live without thee ; and must

^s 2 Cor. iv. 4.

perish eternally because they want thee.—*Occasional Meditations*, 57.

Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee.—St. Luke xviii. 42. (*Gospel*.)

O, THOU, who art the True Light, shine ever through all the blind corners of my soul; and from these weak glimmerings of grace, bring me to the perfect brightness of thy glory!—*Occasional Meditations*, 20.

Ash Wednesday.

Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God.—Joel ii. 13. (*Epistle*.)

THE penitent,—he hath a wounded heart, and a sad face; yet not so much for fear as for unkindness. The wrong of his sin troubles him more than the danger. None but he is the better for his sorrow; neither is any passion more hurtful to others than this is gainful to him.

While he is in charity with all others, he is so fallen out with himself that none but God can reconcile him: he hath sued himself in all courts;

he accuseth, arraigneth, sentenceth, punisheth himself impartially ; and sooner may find mercy at any hand than at his own. He only hath pulled off the fair visor of sin ; so as that which appears not but masked unto others, is seen by himself barefaced ; and bewrays that fearful ugliness, which none can conceive but he that hath viewed it.

He hath looked into the depth of the bottomless pit ; and hath seen his own offence tormented in others, and the same brands shaken at him. He hath seen the change of faces in that Evil One ; as a tempter, as a tormentor ; and hath heard the noise of a conscience : and is so frightened with all these that he can never have rest till he have run out of himself to God : in whose face at first he finds rigour, but, afterwards, sweetness in his bosom : he bleeds first, from the hand that heals him. The Law of God hath made work for mercy ; which he hath no sooner apprehended than he forgets his wounds, and looks carelessly upon all these terrors of guiltiness.

He had never been so good, if he had not sinned ; he had never fought with such courage, if he had not seen his blood, and been ashamed of his foil. Now, he is seen and felt in the front of the spiritual battle, and can teach others how

to fight and encourage them in fighting. His heart was never more taken up with the pleasure of sin than now with care of avoiding it: the first offers of sin make him tremble more now, than he did before at the judgments of his sin; neither dares he so much as look towards Sodom; his infirmity may yield once, his resolution, never. There is none of his senses or parts, of which he hath not taken bonds for their good behaviour; which they cannot ever break with impunity. The wrongs of his sins he repays, to men, with recompense,—hating that it should be said, he owes any thing to his offence: to God, what in him lies, with sighs, tears, vows, and endeavours of amendment. No heart is more waxen to the impressions of forgiveness; neither are his hands more open to receive than to give pardon. All the injuries which are offered to him are swallowed up in his wrongs to his Maker and Redeemer: neither can he call for the arrears of his farthings, when he looks upon the millions forgiven him: he feels not what he suffers from men, when he thinks of what he hath done, and should have suffered.

He is a thankful herald of the mercies of his God; which if all the world hear not from his mouth, it is no fault of his. Neither did he so

burn with the evil fires of concupiscence, as now with the holy flames of zeal to that glory which he hath blemished : and his eyes are full of moisture as his heart of heat. The gates of heaven are not so knocked at by any suitor, whether for frequency or for importunity. You shall find his cheeks furrowed ; his knees hard ; his lips sealed up, save when he must accuse himself, or glorify God ; his eyes humbly dejected : and sometimes you shall catch him breaking off a sigh in the midst ; as one that would steal an humiliation unknown, and would be offended with any part that should not keep his counsel.

When he finds his soul oppressed with the heavy guilt of a sin, he gives it vent through his mouth, into the ear of his Spiritual physician, from whom he receives cordials answerable to his complaint.

He is his own taskmaster for devotion ; and, if Christianity have any work more difficult or perilous than other, that he enjoins himself ; and resolves contentment, even in miscarriage.

None, but he, can relish the promises of the Gospel ; which he finds so sweet that he complains not his thirst after them is unsatiable.—
Characterisms of Virtues, Book i.

When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.—St. Matthew vi. 16—18. (*Gospel.*)

LET us not think it enough to forbear a meal, or to hang down our heads like a bulrush for a day: but let us break the bands of wickedness; and, in true contrition of soul, vow and perform better obedience. Oh, then, as we care to avert the heavy judgments of God from ourselves and our land, as we desire to hand down the Gospel with peace to our posterity, let each man humble one: let each man rend his heart with sorrow for his own sins and the sins of his people: shortly, let every man ransack his own soul and life, and offer a holy violence to all those sinful corruptions which have stirred up the God of heaven against us; and never cease till, in truth of heart, he can say with our blessed Apostle, *I am crucified*⁹.—*Sermon xxv.*

⁹ Gal. ii. 20.

The First Sunday in Lent.

As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing.—2 Cor. vi. 10.
(*Epistle.*)

IF there could be any human receipt prescribed to avoid evils, it would be purchased at a high rate : but, both it is impossible that earth should redress that which is sent from heaven ; and, if it could be done, even the want of miseries would prove miserable : for the mind, cloyed with continual felicity, would grow a burden to itself, loathing that, at last, which intermission would have made pleasant. Give a free horse the full reins, and he will soon tire. Summer is the sweetest season, by all consents, wherein the earth is both most rich with increase, and most gorgeous for ornament ; yet, if it were not received with interchanges of cold frosts and piercing winds, who could live ? Summer would be no summer, if winter did not both lead it in, and follow it. We may not, therefore, either hope or strive to escape all crosses ; some, we may : what thou canst, fly from ; what thou canst not, allay and mitigate. In crosses, universally,

let this be thy rule ; Make thyself none ; escape some ; bear the rest ; sweeten all.—*Heaven upon Earth*, § 8.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.—St. Matthew iv. 1. (*Gospel.*)

No sooner is Christ come out of the water of baptism than he enters into the fire of temptation. No sooner is the Holy Spirit descended upon his head, in the form of a dove, than he is led by the Spirit to be tempted. No sooner doth God say, *This is my beloved Son*¹⁰, than Satan says, *If thou be the Son of God*. It is not in the power either of the gifts or seals of grace to deliver us from the assaults of Satan ; they may have the force to repel evil suggestions, but they have none to prevent them : yea, the more we are engaged unto God by our public vows and his pledges of favour, so much more busy and violent is the rage of that Evil One to encounter us.

Yea, O blessed Saviour, how glorious was it for thee, how happy for us, that thou wast tempted ! Had not Satan tempted thee, how

¹⁰ Mat. iii. 17.

shouldst thou have overcome? Without blows there can be no victory, no triumph. How had thy power been manifested, if no adversary had tried thee? The first Adam was tempted and vanquished: the second Adam, to repay and repair that foil, doth vanquish in being tempted. Now *have we not a Saviour and High Priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but such an one, as was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* How boldly, therefore, may we go unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need¹? Yea, this duel was for us! Now we see by this conflict of our almighty Champion, what manner of adversary we have; how he fights, how he is resisted, how overcome. Now, our very temptation affords us comfort, in that we see that the dearer we are unto God the more obnoxious we are to this trial: neither can we be discouraged by the heinousness of those evils whereto we are moved; since we see the Son of God solicited to infidelity, covetousness, idolatry. How glorious, therefore, was it for thee, O Saviour, how happy for us, that thou wast tempted!

¹ See Heb. iv. 15, 16.

The Spirit led thee ; thine invincible strength did not animate thee into this combat, uncalled. Why do we weaklings so far presume upon our abilities or success, as that we dare thrust ourselves upon temptations, unbidden, unwarranted ? Who can pity the shipwreck of those mariners which will needs put forth and hoist sails in a tempest ?

When our Saviour was hungry, Satan tempted him in matter of food ; not then, of wealth or glory. He well knows, both what baits to fish withal, and when and how to lay them. How safe and happy shall we be, if we shall bend our greatest care where we discern the most danger !

In every temptation there is an appearance of good ; whether of the body, of mind, or estate. The first is *the lust of the flesh*, in any carnal desire ; the second, *the pride of heart and life* ; the third, *the lust of the eyes* ².

To all these the first Adam was tempted, and in all miscarried ; the second Adam is tempted to them all, and overcometh. The first man was tempted to carnal appetite, by the forbidden fruit ; to pride, by the suggestion of being as God ; to

² See 1 John ii. 16.

covetousness, in the ambitious desire of knowing good and evil. Satan having found all the motions so successful with the first Adam in his innocent estate, will now tread the same steps in his temptations of the second. The stones must be made bread ; there is the motion to a carnal appetite :—the guard and attendance of angels must be presumed on ; there is a motion to pride :—the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them must be offered ; there, to covetousness and ambition.

How easy had it been for our Saviour to have confounded Satan by the power of his Godhead ! But he chose rather to vanquish him by the sword of the Spirit, that he might teach us how to resist and overcome the powers of darkness. If he had subdued Satan by the almighty power of the Deity, we might have had what to wonder at, but not what to imitate : now, he useth that weapon which may be familiar unto us, in order that he may teach our weakness how to be victorious.

Nothing in heaven or earth can beat the forces of hell but the word of God. How carefully should we furnish ourselves with this powerful munition ! How should our hearts and mouths be full of it : *Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes. O take not the word of truth utterly out*

*of my mouth. Let thy statutes be my songs in the house of my pilgrimage: so shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me*³.

In the first assault, Satan moves Christ to doubt of his Father's providence, and to use unlawful means to help himself: in the next, he moves him to presume upon his Father's protection, and the service of his blessed angels. He grounds the first upon a conceit of want; the next, of abundance. If he be in extremes, it is all to one end, to mislead into evil. If we cannot be driven down to despair, he labours to lift us up to presumption. It is not one foil that can put this bold Spirit out of countenance. Temptations, like waves, break one in the neck of another. While we are in this warfare, we must make account that the repulse of one temptation doth but invite to another.

He that had presumed thus far, to tempt the Lord of life, would fain now dare him also to presume upon his Deity. *If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down.* There is not a more tried shaft in all his quiver, than this,—a persuasion to

³ See Ps. cxix. 33. 43. 54. 42.

men to bear themselves too bold upon the favour of God. "Thou art the elect and redeemed of God ; sin, because grace hath abounded ; sin, that it may abound. Thou art safe enough, though thou offend ; be not too much an adversary to thine own liberty." False Spirit ! it is no liberty to sin ; but servitude rather. There is liberty ; but it is in freedom from sin. Every one of us, that hath the hope of sons, *must purify himself, even as he is pure*⁴ that hath redeemed us. We are *bought with a price : therefore* must we *glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God's*⁵. Our sonship teaches us awe and obedience ; and therefore, because we are sons, we will not cast ourselves down into sin.

But what is this I see ? Satan himself with a Bible under his arm, with a text in his mouth, *It is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee*. And wherefore doth this foul Spirit urge a text, but for imitation, for prevention, and for success ? Christ hath alleged a Scripture unto him ; he re-alleges Scripture unto Christ. At leastwise he will counterfeit an imitation of the Son of God. Neither is it in this

⁴ See 1 John iii. 3.

⁵ See 1 Cor. vi. 20.

alone : what one act ever passed the hand of God, which Satan did not apishly attempt to second ? If we follow Christ in the outward action with contrary intentions, we follow Satan in following Christ. Or, perhaps Satan meant to make Christ hereby weary of this weapon : as we see fashions, when they are taken up of the unworthy, are cast off by the great. It was, doubtless, one cause why Christ afterwards forbade the Devil even to confess the truth, because his mouth was a slander. But chiefly doth he this, for a better colour of his temptation. He gilds over this false metal with Scripture, that it may pass current. Even now is Satan transformed into an angel of light ; and will seem godly for a mischief. If hypocrites make a fair show, in order to deceive with a glorious lustre of holiness, we see whence they borrowed it. How many thousand souls are betrayed by the abuse of that word, whose use is sovereign and saving ! No devil is so dangerous as the religious devil. If good meat turn to the nourishment, not of nature, but of the disease, we must not forbear to feed, but must endeavour to purge the body of those evil humours which cause the stomach to work against itself. O God, thou that hast given us light, give us clear and sound eyes, that we may take comfort of that light thou hast

given us. Thy word is holy, make our hearts so ; and then shall they find that word not more true than cordial. Let not this divine table of thine be made a snare to our souls !

Is our Saviour distasted with Scripture, because Satan mislays it in his dish ? Doth he not rather snatch this sword out of that impure hand, and beat Satan with the weapon which he abuseth ? It is written again, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

Still doth that subtle Serpent traverse his ground for an advantage. The Temple is not high enough for his next temptation ; he therefore carries up Christ to the top of an exceeding high mountain.

Divers kingdoms, lying round about Judea, were represented to the eye ; the glory of them to the imagination. Satan knew that the eye could tempt the fancy, no less than the fancy could tempt the will. How many thousand souls have died of the wound of the eye ! If we do not let in sin at the window of the eye, or the door of the ear, it cannot enter into our hearts.

But oh, presumption and impudence that hell itself may be ashamed of ! The Devil dares say to Christ, *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* That beggarly Spirit, that hath not an inch of earth, can offer the whole world to the Maker, to the Owner, of it. The slave of God would be adored by his Creator. How can we hope he should be sparing of false boasts, and of unreasonable promises unto us, when he dares offer kingdoms to Him, by whom kings reign !

Never did our Saviour say, *Get thee hence, Satan*, till now. It is a just indignation that is conceived at the motion of rivalry with God. Neither yet did Christ exercise his divine power in this command, but, by the necessary force of Scripture, drives away that impure Tempter ; *It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* The 'rest of our Saviour's answers were more full and direct than that they could admit of a reply ; but this was so flat and absolute that it utterly daunted the courage of Satan, and put him to a shameful flight, and made him for the time weary of his trade.

The way to be rid of the troublesome sollicita-

tions of that Wicked One is continued resistance. He, that forcibly drove the Tempter from himself, takes him off from us, and will not suffer his assaults to be perpetual. It is our exercise and trial that he intends : not our confusion.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book ii. Con. 3.*

The Second Sunday in Lent.

We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.—1 Thess. iv. 1. (*Epistle.*)

I SEE that, in natural motions, the nearer any thing comes to its end the swifter it moveth. I have seen great rivers, which, at their first rising out of some hill's side, might be covered with a bushel, but after many miles, fill a very broad channel ; and, drawing near to the sea, do even make a little sea within their own banks. So the wind, at the first rising, is a little vapour from the crannies of the earth ; and, passing forward about the earth, the further it goes, the more blustering and violent it waxeth. A Christian's motion, after

he is regenerate, is made natural to God-ward ; and therefore the nearer he comes to heaven the more zealous he is. A good man must be like the sun : not like Hezekiah's sun, that went backward ; nor like Joshua's sun, that stood still ; but David's sun, that, like a bridegroom, comes out of his chamber, and as a champion, rejoiceth to run his race : only herein is the difference, that when he comes to his high noon, he declineth not. —*Meditations and Vows, Century i. Med. 6.*

And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David ! my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.—St. Matthew xv. 22. (*Gospel.*)

To the shame of those careless Jews, even a faithful Canaanite is a suppliant to Christ, while they neglect so great salvation.

She doth not speak, but cry. Need and desire have raised her voice to an importunate clamour. The God of mercy is light of hearing, yet he loves a loud and vehement solicitation ; not to make himself inclinable to grant, but to make us capable to receive blessings. They are words, and not prayers, which fall from careless lips. If we felt our want, or wanted not desire, we could speak to God in no tune but cries. If we would

prevail with God, we must wrestle; and if we would wrestle happily with God, we must wrestle first with our own dulness.

Who would now expect any other than a kind answer to so pious and faithful a petition? *But he answered her not a word.* O Holy Saviour, we have often found cause to wonder at thy words,—never till now at thy silence! A miserable suppliant cries and sues, while the God of mercies is speechless. He, that comforts the afflicted, adds affliction to the comfortless, by a willing disregard. What shall we say then? Is the fountain of Mercy dried up? O Saviour, couldst thou but hear? She did not murmur, not whisper, but cry out. Couldst thou but pity, but regard, her that was as good as she was miserable? If thy ears were open, could thy bowels be shut? Certainly, it was thou, that didst put it into the heart, into the mouth, of this woman to ask, and to ask thus of thyself! She could never have said, *O Lord, thou Son of David*, but from thee, but by thee. *No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*⁶. Much more therefore didst thou hear the words of thine own

⁶ 1 Cor. xii. 3.

making ; and well wert thou pleased to hear what thou thoughtest good to forbear to answer. It was thine own grace that sealed up thy lips.

It was no small fruit of Christ's silence, that the disciples were hereupon moved to pray for her ;—not for a mere dismissal ; (it had been no favour to have required this, but a punishment ; for if to be held in suspense be miserable, to be sent away with a repulse is more)—but for a merciful grant.

Christ would not answer the woman, but doth answer the disciples. But who can tell whether that silence or this answer be more grievous ? *I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* What is this answer, but a defence of that silence and seeming neglect ?

Is it possible the poor woman should have any glimpse of hope after so resolute repulses ? Yet still, as if she saw no argument of discouragement, she comes, and worships, and cries, *Lord help me.*

She saith not, *Lord, if thou canst*⁷, help me, as

⁷ Mark ix. 22.

the father of the lunatic ; but professes the power, while she begs the act ; and gives glory, where she would have relief.

Who now can expect other than a fair and yielding answer to so humble, so faithful, so patient a suppliant ? What can speed well, if a prayer of faith from the knees of humility succeeds not ? And yet, behold, the further she goes the worse she fares ; her discouragement is doubled with her suit. *It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs*^a.

The reply is not more witty than faithful. "O Lord, thou art truth itself. Thy words can be no other than truth. Thou hast called me a dog, and a dog I am ; give me therefore the favour and privilege of a dog, that I may gather up some crumbs of mercy from under that table whereat thy children sit. This blessing, though great to me, yet to the infiniteness of thy power and mercy is but as a crumb to a feast. I presume not to press to the board, but to creep under it. Deny me not those small offals which else would be swept away in the dust. After this stripe, give me but a crumb, and I shall fawn upon thee, and depart satisfied."

^a Mat. xv. 26.

O woman, say I, great is thy humility, great is thy patience : but, *O woman*, saith my Saviour, *great is thy faith*. He sees the root ; we, the stock. Nothing but faith could thus temper the heart, thus strengthen the soul, thus charm the tongue.

O precious faith ! O acceptable perseverance ! It is no marvel, if that chiding end in favour : *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt*. Never did such grace go away uncrowned. The beneficence had been strait, if thou hadst not carried away more than thou suedst for. Lo, thou, that camest a dog, goest away a child ; thou, that wouldst but creep under the children's feet, art set at their elbow ; thou, that wouldst have taken up a crumb, art feasted with full dishes. The way to speed well at God's hand is to be humbled in his eyes, and in our own.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 1.*

The Third Sunday in Lent.

But rather giving of thanks.—Eph. v. 4. (*Epistle.*)

FROM the altar of a pure heart every good man offers, as he ought, unto God the constant sacrifice of praise. Every fresh experience of his bounty should renew the gratitude of our minds,—should elicit new ejaculations of praise, and the secret elevations of a joyful heart to our munificent Benefactor in heaven. Do we awake early in the morning from sleep? and shall we not lift up our hearts and eyes and hands to heaven, and bless our God, who has not only allowed us a season of rest, but restored our light again? Do we sit down to table,—or do we rise, satisfied with our meal,—and shall we not praise the great Householder of the Universe, who has granted us both food to eat, and an appetite for its enjoyment? As the evening now draws in, do we lie down upon our beds,—and shall we not extol the marvellous goodness of God, who has made the past day happy to us? Do we but take a step abroad, and contemplate the spacious vault of

heaven, encircling us afar, and the immense plain of the earth stretched out before our feet,—and shall we not adore his power and wisdom, who formed a fabric so stupendous? He must needs be an utter stranger both to God and to himself, who lays not hold of every opportunity of praising his Creator and Redeemer,—who feels not his mind grow warm under the rays of every fresh act of his beneficence.—*On the Manner of Walking with God.*

When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. —St. Luke xi. 21, 22. (*Gospel.*)

ONLY Christianity hath this power, which, with our second birth, gives us a new nature; so that now, if excess of passions be natural to us as men, the order of them is natural to us as Christians. Reason bids the angry man say over his alphabet ere he give his answer; hoping by this intermission of time to gain the mitigation of his rage: since he was never thoroughly angry that can endure the recital of so many idle letters. Christianity gives not rules, but power, to avoid this short madness. It was a wise speech that is

reported of our best and last cardinal⁹, I hope, that this island either did or shall see; who, when a skilful astrologer, upon the calculation of his nativity, had foretold him some specialties concerning his future estate; answered, "Such perhaps I was born: but since that time, I have been born again; and my second nativity hath crossed my first." The power of nature is a good plea for those that acknowledge nothing above nature: but, for a Christian to excuse his intemperateness, by his natural inclination, and to say, "I am born choleric, sullen, amorous," is an apology worse than the fault. Wherefore serves religion, but to subdue or govern nature? We are so much Christians, as we can rule ourselves: the rest is but form and speculation. Yea, the very thought of our profession is so powerful, that, like unto that precious stone, being cast into this sea, it assuageth those inward tempests that were raised by the affections. The unregenerate mind is not capable of this power; and, therefore, through the continual mutinies of his passions, cannot but be subject to perpetual unquietness. There is neither remedy, nor hope, in this estate. But the Christian soul, that hath inured itself to the

⁹ Cardinal Pole.

awe of God and the exercises of true mortification, by the only looking up at his holy profession, cureth the burning venom of those fiery serpents that lurk within him. Hast thou nothing, but nature? Resolve to look for no peace. God is not prodigal, to cast away his best blessings on so unworthy subjects. Art thou a Christian? do but remember thou art so; and then, if thou darest, if thou canst, yield to the excess of passions.—*Heaven upon Earth*, § 7.

The Fourth Sunday in Lent.

We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.
—Gal. iv. 28. (*Epistle.*)

SOME promise what they cannot do; as Satan to Christ: some what they could, but mean not to do; as the sons of Jacob to the Shechemites: some what they meant for the time, and after retreat; as Laban to Jacob: some what they do also give but unwillingly; as Herod: some, what they willingly give and after repent them; as Joshua to the Gibeonites. So great distrust is there in

man, whether from his impotency or faithlessness. As in other things, so in this, I see God is not like man; but, in whatever He promises, He approves Himself most faithful, both in his ability and performances. I will therefore ever trust God on his bare word; even with hope, besides hope, above hope, against hope; and onwards I will rely on Him for small matters of this life: for how shall I hope to trust Him in impossibilities, if I may not in likelihoods? How shall I depend on Him, for raising my body from dust, and saving my soul, if I mistrust Him for a crust of bread, towards my preservation?—*Meditations and Vows*, x. Cent. 1.

And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.—St. John vi. 11. (*Gospel*.)

As God takes pleasure in doing wonders for men, so He loves to be acknowledged in the great works that He doth. He hath no reason to part with his own glory: that is too precious for Him to lose, or for his creature to embezzle. And how justly didst thou, O Saviour, in this, mean to teach thy disciples, that it was thou only who feedest the world, and upon whom both themselves and all their fellow-creatures must depend, for

their nourishment and provision; and that if it came not through thy hands, it could not come to theirs.

He that is the master of the feast, marshals the guests; *He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass*¹. They obey, and expect. O marvellous faith! So many thousands sit down, and address themselves to a meal, when they saw nothing but five poor barley loaves and two small fishes. None of them say "Sit down? to what? Here are the mouths, but where is the meat? We can soon be set, but whence shall we be served? Ere we draw our knives, let us see our cheer:"—but they meekly and obediently dispose themselves to their places, and look up to Christ for a miraculous purveyance. It is for all that would be Christ's followers to lead the life of faith; and, even where means appear not, to wait upon that merciful hand. Nothing is more easy than to trust God when our barns and coffers are full, and to say, *Give us this day our daily bread*², when we have it in our cupboard; but when we have nothing, when we know not how or whence to get any thing, then to depend upon an invisible

¹ Mat. xiv. 19.

² Mat. vi. 11.

bounty, this is a true and noble act of faith. To cast away our own, that we may immediately live upon Divine Providence, I know no warrant: but when the necessity is of God's making, we see our refuge; and happy are we if our confidence can fly to it and rest in it. Yea, fulness would be a curse, if it should debar us from this dependence.

And why not rather by his own hand to the multitude, that so the miracle and thanks might have been more immediate? Wherefore was this, O Saviour, but that thou mightest win respect to thy disciples from the people? as great princes, when they would ingratiate a favourite, pass no suits but through his hands. What an honour was this to thy servants, that, as thou wast Mediator betwixt thy Father and man, so thou wouldest have them, on some beneficial occasion, mediate betwixt men and thee!

He gave the bread, then, to his disciples; not to eat, not to keep, but to distribute. It was not their particular benefit He regarded in this gift, but the good of many. In every feast, each servitor takes up his dish, not to carry it aside into a corner for his own private repast, but to set it before the

guests for the honour of his Master : when they have done, his cheer begins. What shall we say to those injurious waiters, who fatten themselves with those concealed messes which are meant for others ? Their table is made their snare ; and these stolen morsels cannot but end in bitterness.

God's undertakings cannot but be exquisite. Those whom He professes to feed must needs have enough. The measure of his bounty cannot but run over. Doth He take upon Him to prepare a table for his Israel in the desert ?—the bread shall be the food of angels ; the flesh shall be the delicate of princes ; manna and quails. Doth He take upon Him to make wine for the marriage-feast of Cana ?—there shall be both store and choice ; the produce of vintage is poor in comparison with this. Will He feast his auditors in the wilderness ?—if they have not dainties, they shall have plenty : *They all did eat, and were filled*³. Neither yet, O Saviour, is thy hand closed. What abundance of heavenly doctrine dost thou set before us ! how are we feasted, yea, pampered, with thy celestial delicacies ! Not according to our meanness, but according to thy state, are we fed. Thrifty and

³ Mat. xiv. 20.

niggardly collations are not for princes. We are full of thy goodness ; oh, let our hearts run over with thanks !—*Meditations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 5.*

The Fifth Sunday in Lent.

By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.—Heb. ix. 12. (*Epistle.*)

REDEMPTION was the great errand for which the Son of God came down into the world, and the work which He did, while He was in the world ; and that, which, in way of application of it, He shall be ever accomplishing till He shall deliver up his mediatory kingdom into the hands of his Father. In this He begins, in this He finishes, the great business of our salvation : for those, who, in this life, are enlightened by his wisdom, justified by his merits, sanctified by his grace, are yet conflicting with manifold temptations, and struggling with varieties of miseries and of dangers ; till upon their happy death and glorious resurrection,

they shall be fully freed, by their ever-blessed and victorious Redeemer.

He, therefore, who, by virtue of that heavenly union, is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, is also, upon the same ground, made unto us our full Redemption.

Redemption implies a captivity. We are naturally under the woeful bondage of the Law, of Sin, of Miseries, of Death.

The Law is a cruel exactor; for it requires of us what we cannot now do, and whips us for not doing it: For *the law worketh wrath*⁴: and *as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse*⁵. Sin is a worse tyrant than he; and takes advantage to exercise his cruelty, by the law. *For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death*⁶. Upon sin necessarily follows Misery, the forerunner of death; and Death the upshot of all miseries: *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*⁷.

From all these, Christ is our Redemption. From the Law; for *Christ hath redeemed us from*

⁴ Rom. iv. 15.

⁵ Gal. iii. 10.

⁶ Rom. vii. 5.

⁷ Rom. v. 12.

*the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*⁸. From Sin: for we are *dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*⁹. *Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace*¹. From Death; and therefore from all Miseries: *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ*². Now, then, let the Law do his worst: *we are not under the law, but under grace*³. The case therefore is altered, betwixt the Law and us: it is not now a cruel taskmaster, to beat us to and for our work; it is our schoolmaster, to direct and to whip us unto Christ. It is not a severe judge to condemn us; it is a friendly guide to set the way toward heaven.

Let Sin join his forces together with the Law: they cannot prevail to our hurt: *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:*

⁸ Gal. iii. 13.

⁹ Rom. vi. 11.

¹ Rom. vi. 14.

² 1 Cor. xv. 55—57.

³ Rom. vi. 14.

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit ⁴.

Let Death join his forces with them both : we are yet safe : *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death* ⁵.

What can we therefore fear, what can we suffer, while Christ is made our Redemption ?

Finally, as thus Christ is *made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption* ⁶; so whatsoever else He either is, or hath, or doth, by virtue of this blessed union, becomes ours. He is our *Riches* ⁷, our *Strength* ⁸, our *Glory* ⁹, our *Salvation* ¹, our *All* ². He is all to us ; and all is ours in Him.—*Christ Mystical, Chap. v. § 1.*

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day : and he saw it, and was glad.—St. John viii. 56. (*Gospel.*)

INFIDELITY and faith look both through the same perspective glass, but at contrary ends. Infidelity looks through the wrong end of the glass ;

⁴ Rom. viii. 3, 4.

⁶ 1 Cor. i. 30.

⁸ Ps. xxvii. 1 ; xxviii. 7.

¹ 1 Thess. v. 9 ; Isa. xii. 2.

⁵ Rom. viii. 2.

⁷ Eph. i. 7.

⁹ Eph. i. 18.

² Col. iii. 11.

and therefore sees those objects which are near, afar off, and makes great things little ; diminishing the greatest spiritual blessings, and removing far off from us threatened evils : Faith looks at the right end ; and brings the blessings that are far off in time, close to our eyes ; and multiplies God's mercies, which, in a distance, lost their greatness. Thus, the faithful Abraham saw his seed possessed of the promised land, when as yet he had no seed, nor was likely to have any ; when the seed, which he should have, should not enjoy it till after four hundred years. Thus that good patriarch saw Christ's day and rejoiced. Thus our first parent comforted himself, after his ejection out of paradise, with the foresight of that blessed seed of the woman which should be exhibited almost four thousand years after. Still, and ever, faith is like itself. What use were there of that grace, if it did not fetch home to my eye things future and invisible ? That this dissolved body shall be raised out of the dust, and enlivened with this very soul wherewith it is now animated, and both of them put into a condition eternally glorious,—is as clearly represented to my soul in this glass, as if it were already done. *He is faithful that promised*³.—*Select Thoughts*, xxx.

³ Heb. x. 23.

The Sunday next before Easter.

Christ Jesus, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.—Phil. ii. 5—8. (*Epistle.*)

WHERE shall I begin to wonder at thee, O thou divine and eternal Peace-maker, the Saviour of Men, the Anointed of God, Mediator between God and man : in whom there is nothing which doth not exceed, not only the conceit, but the very wonder of Angels, who saw thee in thy humiliation with silence, and adore thee in thy glory with perpetual praises and rejoicings ? Thou wast for ever of thyself as God ; of the Father, as the Son ; the Eternal Son, of an Eternal Father ; not later in being, not less in dignity, not other in substance ; begotten without diminution of Him that begot thee, while He communicated that wholly to thee, which He retained wholly in Himself, because both were infinite without inequality of nature,

without division of essence : when being in this estate, thine infinite love and mercy to desperate mankind caused thee, O Saviour, to empty thyself of thy glory, that thou mightest put on our shame and misery. Wherefore, not ceasing to be God as thou wert, thou beganst to be what thou wast not, man ; to the end that thou mightest be a perfect Mediator betwixt God and man, which wert both in one person ; God, that thou mightest satisfy ; man, that thou mightest suffer : that since man had sinned, and God was offended, thou, which wert God and man, mightest satisfy God for man. None but thyself, which art the Eternal Word, can express the depth of this mystery, that God should be clothed with flesh, come down to men, and become man ; that man might be exalted into the highest heavens, and that our nature might be taken into the fellowship of the Deity ; that He, to whom all powers in heaven bowed, and thought it their honour to be serviceable, should come down to be a servant to his slaves, a ransom for his enemies ; together with our nature taking up our very infirmities, our shame, our torments, and bearing our sins without sin : that thou whom the heavens were too strait to contain, shouldst lay thyself in an obscure cratch ; thou which wert attended of angels, shouldst be derided of men, rejected

of thine own, persecuted by tyrants, tempted with devils, betrayed of thy servant, crucified among thieves, and, which was worse than all these, in thine own apprehension, for the time, as forsaken of thy Father : that thou whom our sins had pierced, shouldest for our sins, both sweat drops of blood in the garden, and pour out streams of blood upon the cross.

Oh, the invaluable purchase of our peace ! O ransom enough for more worlds ! Thou which wast, in the counsel of thy Father, the Lamb slain from the beginning of time, camest now, in fulness of time, to be slain by man, for man ; being at once the Sacrifice offered, the Priest that did offer, and the God to whom it was offered. How graciously didst thou both proclaim our peace as a Prophet, in the time of thy life upon earth ; and purchase it, by thy blood, as a Priest, at thy death ; and now confirmest and appliest it, as a King, in heaven ! By thee only it was procured ; by thee, it is proffered. O mercy without example, without measure !—*Heaven upon Earth*, § 5.

And they crucified him.—St. Matthew xxvii. 35. (*Gospel.*)

BEHOLD, He that *thought it not robbery to be*

*equal with God*⁴, is made equal to robbers and murderers; yea, superior in the suffering of evil.

What suffered He? As all lives are not alike pleasant, so all deaths are not equally fearful. There is not more difference betwixt some life and death, than betwixt one death and another. See the Apostle's gradation: *He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*⁵: the cross, a lingering, tormenting, ignominious death.

Yet, all that die the same death are not equally miserable; the very thieves fared better in their death than He. I hear of no irrision, no inscription, no taunts, no insultation on them: they had nothing but pain to encounter; He, pain and scorn. An ingenuous and noble nature can worse brook this than the other; any thing, rather than disdainfulness and derision, especially from a base enemy.

Which of his senses now was not a window to let in sorrow? His Eyes saw the tears of his Mother and friends, the unthankful demeanour of mankind, the cruel despite of his enemies: His Ears heard the revilings and blasphemies of the multitude; and, whether the place was noisome to his Scent, his Touch felt the nails, his Taste the gall.

⁴ Phil. ii. 6.

⁵ Phil. ii. 8.

Look up, O all ye beholders, look upon this precious body, and see what part ye can find free. That Head, which is adored and trembled at by the angelical spirits, is all raked and harrowed with thorns : that Face, of which it is said, *Thou art fairer than the children of men*⁶, is all besmeared with the filthy spittle of the Jews, and furrowed with his tears : those Eyes, clearer than the Sun, are darkened with the shadow of death : those Ears, that hear the heavenly concerts of angels now are filled with the cursed speakings and scoffs of wretched men : those Lips that *spake as never man spake*⁷, that command the spirits, both of light and darkness, are scornfully wet with vinegar and gall : those Feet that trample on all the powers of hell (*his enemies are made his footstool*⁸) are now nailed to the footstool of the Cross : those Hands, that freely sway the sceptre of the heavens, now carry the reed of reproach, and are nailed to the tree of reproach : that whole Body which was conceived by the Holy Ghost, was all scourged, wounded, mangled ; this is the outside of his sufferings.

Was his Heart free ? Oh no : the inner part

⁶ Ps. xlv. 2.

⁷ See John vii. 46.

⁸ See Ps. cx. 1.

or soul of this pain, which was unseen, is as far beyond these outward and sensible, as the soul is beyond the body, God's wrath beyond the malice of men. These were but love-tricks, to what his soul endured ; *All ye that pass by, behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow*⁹. Alas, Lord, what can we see of thy sorrows ? we cannot conceive so much as the heinousness and desert of one of those sins, which thou bearest ; we can no more see thy pain than we could undergo it ; only this we see, that what the infinite sins of almost infinite men committed against an Infinite Majesty, deserved in infinite continuance ; all this thou in the short time of thy Passion, hast sustained. We may behold and see ; but all the glorious spirits in heaven cannot look into the depth of this suffering.

Yet any thing is light to the soul, while the comforts of God sustain it : who can dismay, when God will relieve ? But here, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?* What a word was here, to come from the mouth of the Son of God ! " My disciples are men, weak and fearful : no marvel if they forsake me. The Jews are themselves cruel and obstinate. Men are men,

⁹ Lam. i. 12.

graceless and unthankful. Devils are according to their nature, spiteful and malicious. All these do but their kind; and let them do it: but thou, O Father, thou that hast said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*¹⁰; thou of whom I have said, *It is my Father that honoureth me*¹; what, forsaken me? Not only brought me to this shame, smitten me, unregarded me; but as it were, forgotten, yea, forsaken me? What! even me, my Father? How many of thy constant servants have suffered many things! yet, in the multitudes of the sorrows of their hearts, thy presence and comforts have refreshed their souls. Hast thou relieved them and dost thou forsake me? me, thine only, dear, natural, eternal Son?" O ye heavens and earth, how could you stand, while the Maker of you thus complained? Ye stood; but, partaking, after a sort, of his Passion: the earth trembled and shook; her rocks tore; her graves opened; the heavens withdrew their light, as not daring to behold this sad and fearful spectacle.

O dear Christians, how should these earthen and rocky hearts of ours shake, and rend in pieces, at this meditation! How should our faces

¹⁰ Mat. iii. 17.

¹ John viii. 54.

be covered with darkness, and our joy be turned into heaviness! All these voices and tears and sweats and pangs are for us; yea, from us. Shall the Son of God thus smart for our sins, yea, with our sins, and shall we not grieve for our own? Shall He weep to us in this market-place, and shall we not mourn? Nay, shall He sweat and bleed for us, and shall not we weep for ourselves? Shall He thus lamentably cry out, under his Father's wrath, and shall not we tremble? Shall the heavens and earth suffer with Him, and we suffer nothing?

I call you not to a weak and idle pity of our glorious Saviour: to what purpose? His injury was our glory. No, no; *Ye daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves*²; for our sins, that have done this; not for his sorrow that suffered it; not for his pangs, that were; but for our own, that should have been, and, if we repent not, shall be. Oh, how grievous, how deadly, are our sins, that cost the Son of God, besides blood, so much torment! How far are our souls gone, that could not be ransomed with an easier price! That which took so much of this Infinite Redeemer of men, God and man,

² Luke xxiii. 28.

how can it choose but swallow up and confound thy soul, which is but finite and sinful ! If thy soul had been in his soul's stead, what had become of it ? It shall be, if his were not in stead of thine.—*Sermon ii.*

Monday before Easter.

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah ? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength ?—Isa. lxiii. 1. (*Epistle.*)

O LORD, thou treadest this wine-press alone ; none to accompany, none to assist thee. I remember, Ruffinus, in his Ecclesiastical Story, reports that one Theodorus, a martyr, told him that when he was hanging ten hours upon the rack for religion, under Julian's persecution, his joints distended and distorted, his body exquisitely tortured with change of executioners, so as never age, saith he, could remember the like,—he felt no pain at all, but continued indeed all the while in the sight of all men singing and smiling : for there

stood a comely young man by him on his gibbet, an angel rather in form of a man, which, with a clean towel, still wiped off his sweat, and poured cold water upon his racked limbs, wherewith he was so refreshed that it grieved him to be let down. Even the greatest torments are easy, when they have answerable comforts; *but a wounded and comfortless spirit, who can bear*³?

If yet but the same Messenger of God might have attended his Cross, that appeared in his Agony; and might have given ease to their Lord, as he did to his servant! And yet, what can the angels help where God will smite? Against the violence of men, against the fury of Satan, they have prevailed in the cause of God, for men: they dare not, they cannot, comfort, where God will afflict. When our Saviour had been wrestling with Satan in the end of his Lent, then they appeared to Him and served; but now, while, about the same time, He is wrestling with the wrath of his Father for us, not an angel dare be seen to look out of the windows of heaven to relieve Him.—*Sermon ii.*

³ Prov. xviii. 14.

And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I?—St. Mark xiv. 18, 19. (*Gospel.*)

WHILE he thinks fit to conceal his treachery, our Saviour thinks not fit to conceal the knowledge of that treacherous conspiracy; *Verily, I say unto you, one of you which eateth with me shall betray me.* Who would not think but that discovered wickedness should be ashamed of itself? Did not Judas, think we, blush, and grow pale again, and cast down his guilty eyes, and turn away his troubled countenance at so galling an intimation? Custom of sin steels the brow, and makes it incapable of any relenting impressions.

Could the other disciples have discerned any change in any one of their faces, they had not been so sorrowfully affected with the charge. Methinks, I see how intently they bent their eyes upon each other, as if they would have looked through those windows down into the bosom; with what self-confidence, with what mutual jealousy they perused each other's foreheads: and now, as rather thinking fit to distrust their own innocence than their Master's assertion, each

trembles to say *Is it I?* It is possible, there may lurk secret wickedness in some blind corner of the heart, which we know not of: it is possible, that time and temptation, working upon our corruption, may at last draw us into some such sin as we could not fore-believe. Whither may we not fall, if we be left to our own strength? It is both wise and holy to misdoubt the worst: *Lord, Is it I?*

In the mean time, how fair hath Judas, all this while, carried with his fellows! Had his former life bewrayed any falsehood or misdemeanour, they had soon found where to pitch their just suspicion: now Judas goes for so honest a man, that every disciple is rather ready to suspect himself than him. It is true, he was a thief; but who knows that besides his Maker? The outsides of men are no less deceitful than their hearts. It is not more unsafe to judge by outward appearances, than it is uncharitable not to judge so.

O the headstrong resolutions of wickedness, not to be checked by any opposition! Who would not but have thought, if the notice of an intended evil could not have prevented it, yet that the threats of judgment should have affrighted the boldest offender? Judas can sit by and hear his Master say, *Woe unto that man by whom the Son*

of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born⁴, and is no more blanked than very innocence; but thinks, "What care I? I have the money; I shall escape the shame: the fact shall be close, the match gainful: it will be long ere I gain so much by my service; if I fare well for the present, I shall shift well enough for the future." Thus, secretly, he claps up another bargain; he makes a *covenant with death, and with hell an agreement*⁵. O Judas, didst thou ever hear ought but truth fall from the mouth of that thy Divine Master? Canst thou distrust the certainty of that dreadful menace of vengeance? How then durst thou persist in the purpose of so flagitious a villainy? Resolved sinners run on desperately in their wicked courses, and have so bent their eyes upon the profit or pleasure of their mischievous projects, that they will not see hell lie open before them in the way.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 27.*

But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the

⁴ Mat. xxvi. 24.

⁵ See Isa. xxviii. 15.

cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.—St. Mark xiv. 29, 30. (*Gospel.*)

THERE is nothing more easy than for a man to be courageous in a time of safety, and to defy those dangers which he neither feels nor sees. While the coast is clear, every man can be ready to say with Peter, *Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee*⁶. But, when the evil hour cometh, when our enemy appears in the lists ready to encounter us, then to call up our spirits and to grapple resolutely with dangers and death, it is the praise and proof of a true Christian valour. And this is that which the Apostle calls *standing*⁷, in opposition to both falling and fleeing; falling, out of faintness;—and fleeing, for fear. It shall not be possible for us thus to stand, if we shall trust to our feet. In and of ourselves, the best of us are but mere cowards; neither can we be able so much as to look our enemy in the face. Would we be perfect victors? we must go out of ourselves, into the God of our strength. If we have made Him ours, who shall, yea, who can be against us? *I can do all things, through Christ which*

⁶ Mat. xxvi. 33. 35.

⁷ See Eph. vi. 13, 14.

strengtheneth me^{*}: all things; therefore conquer death and hell. If we be weakness, He is omnipotence. *Put we on the Lord Jesus Christ*[°] by a lively faith, what enemy can come within us to do us hurt?—*Select Thoughts*, lxxiv.

Tuesday before Easter.

I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.—Isa. l. 6. (*Epistle.*)

IF we should judge according to the appearance, we should think basely of the Saviour of the world. Who that had seen Him lying in the manger, flitting to Egypt, chopping of chips at Nazareth, famishing in the desert, transported by Satan, attended by fishermen, persecuted by his kindred, betrayed by one servant, abjured by another, forsaken of all, apprehended, arraigned, condemned, buffeted, spat upon, scourged to blood, sceptred with the reed, crowned with thorns,

^{*} Phil. iv. 13.

[°] Rom. xiii. 14.

nailed to the cross, hanging naked betwixt two thieves, scorned of the beholders, sealed up in a borrowed grave; could say other than, *He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him*¹? Who that should have seen his skin all dewed with pearls of bloody sweat, his back bleeding, his face blubbered and besmeared, his forehead harrowed, his hands and feet pierced, his side gushing out, his head bowed down in death, and should withal have heard his dying lips say, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*²? would not have said, *He is despised and rejected of men*³, yea, in appearance, of God himself? Yet, even this while, to the cutting of the sinews of those stiff-necked Jews, the Angels owned Him for their Lord, the Sages adored Him, the Star designed Him, the Prophets foreshewed Him, the Devils confessed Him, his Miracles evinced Him, the Earth shook, the Rocks rent, the Dead looked out, the Sun looked in astonished at the sufferings of the God of Nature. Even while He was despised of men, He commanded the Devils to their chains: while base men shot out their

¹ Isa. liii. 2.² Mat. xxvii. 46.³ Isa. liii. 3.

tongues at Him, Principalities and Powers bowed their knees to Him ; while He hanged despicably upon the tree of shame, the Powers of Hell were dragged captive after the triumphant chariot of his Cross.—*Sermon viii.*

The chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.—St. Mark xv. 11. (*Gospel.*)

CORRUPT custom, in memory of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, allowed to gratify the Jews with the free delivery of some one prisoner. Tradition would be encroaching: the Paschal Lamb was monument enough of that happy rescue ; but men affect to have something of their own. Pilate was willing to take this advantage of dismissing Jesus. That he might be the more likely to prevail, he proposeth Him, with the choice and nomination of so notorious a malefactor as he might justly think incapable of all mercy: Barabbas, a thief, a murderer, a seditionary ; infamous for all, odious to all. Had he propounded some other innocent prisoner, he might have feared the election would be doubtful : he cannot misdoubt the competition of so prodigious a malefactor. *Then cried they all again,*

saying, *Not this man, but Barabbas*⁴. O malice, beyond all example shameless and bloody! Who can but blush to think that a heathen should see Jews so impetuously unjust, so savagely cruel? He knew there was no fault to be found in Jesus; he knew there was no crime that was not to be found in Barabbas: yet he hears, and blushes to hear, them say, *Not this man, but Barabbas*.

Was not this, think we, out of similitude of condition? Every thing affects the like to itself: every thing affects the preservation of that it liketh. What wonder is it then, if ye Jews, who profess yourselves the murderers of that Just One, favour a Barabbas?

O Saviour, what a killing indignity was this for thee to hear from thine own nation! Hast thou refused all glory, to put on shame and misery for their sakes? Hast thou disregarded thy blessed self to save them? and do they refuse thee for Barabbas? Hast thou said, "Not heaven, but earth; not sovereignty, but service; not the Gentile, but the Jew?" and do they say, *Not this man, but Barabbas*? Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people⁵ and unjust? Thus were thine ears and thine eyes first crucified, and,

⁴ John xviii. 40.

⁵ Deut. xxxii. 6.

through them, was thy soul wounded even to death, before thy death; while thou sawest their rage, and heardest their noise of *Crucify him, crucify him*⁶.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 31.*

Wednesday before Easter.

It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.—Heb. ix. 27. (*Epistle.*)

It is the goodness of our God that He will not have his children die any where but where they may see the land of promise before them; neither can they depart without much comfort to have seen it: contrarily, a wicked man that looks down, and sees hell before him, how can he choose but find more horror in the end of death, than in the way?

It is neither harsh nor news to God's children, to hear or think of their departure: to them death hath lost his horror, through acquaintance; those faces which at first sight seemed ill favoured, by

⁶ Luke xxiii. 21.

often viewing, grow out of dislike : they have so often thought and resolved of the necessity and of the issue of their dissolution, that they cannot hold it either strange or unwelcome : he that hath had such entire conversation with God cannot fear to go to Him. Those that know Him not, or know that He will not know them, no marvel if they tremble.—*Contemplations upon the Old Testament, Book vii. Con. 5.*

And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.—St. Luke xxii. 60—62. (*Gospel.*)

How harshly did this note sound in the ear of Peter ; yea, pierced his very heart ! Many a time had he heard this bird, and was no whit moved with the noise : now there was a bird in his bosom that crowed louder than this ; whose shrill accent, conjoined with this, astonished the guilty disciple. The weary labourer, when he is awakened from his sweet sleep by this natural clock of the household, is not so angry at this troublesome bird, nor so vexed at the hearing of that unseasonable sound, as Peter was, when this

fowl awakened his sleeping conscience, and called him to a timely repentance. This cock did but crow, like others; neither made nor knew any difference of this tone and the rest: there was a Divine hand that ordered this morning's note to be a summons of penitence. He that foretold it had foreappointed it: that bird could not but crow then; and all the noise in the High Priest's hall could not keep that sound from Peter's ear.

But, O Saviour, couldst thou find leisure, when thou stoodest at the bar of that unjust and cruel judgment, amidst all that bloody rabble of enemies, in the sense of all their fury and the expectation of thine own death, to listen unto this monitor of Peter's repentance; and upon the hearing of it, to cast back thine eyes upon thy denying, cursing, abjuring disciple? O mercy without measure, and beyond all the possibility of our admiration; to neglect thyself, for a sinner! to attend the repentance of one, when thou wert about to lay down thy life for all!

O God! thou art still equally merciful. Every elect soul is no less dear unto thee. Let the sound of thy faithful monitors smite my ears; and let the beams of thy merciful eyes wound my heart; so as I may go forth, and weep bitterly.—*Occasional Meditations*, xc.

Thursday before Easter.

The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread : and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat : this is my body, which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood : this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. —1 Cor. xi. 23—25. (*Epistle.*)

WHAT a clear representation is here of the great work of our redemption ! How is my Saviour, by all my senses, here brought home to my soul ! How is his passion lively acted before mine eyes ! for lo, my bodily eye doth not more truly see bread and wine, than the eye of my faith sees the body and blood of my dear Redeemer : thus was his sacred body torn and broken ; thus was his precious blood poured out for me. My sins, wretched man that I am ! helped thus to crucify my Saviour ; and for the discharge of my sins would He be thus crucified.

Neither did He only give Himself for me upon the cross ; but lo, He both offers and gives Himself to me in this his blessed institution.

What had this general gift been without this application? Now my hand doth not more sensibly take, nor my mouth more really eat, this bread, than my soul doth spiritually receive and feed on the bread of life. O Saviour, thou art the living bread that came down from heaven. Thy flesh is meat indeed, and thy blood is drink indeed. Oh, that I may so eat of this bread, that I may live for ever! He that cometh to thee shall never hunger: he that believeth in thee shall never thirst. Oh, that I could now so hunger and so thirst for thee that my soul could be for ever satisfied with thee! Thy people of old were fed with manna in the wilderness, yet they died; that food of angels could not keep them from perishing: but oh, for the Hidden Manna, which giveth life to the world, even thy Blessed Self! Give me ever of this bread, and my soul shall not die, but live.

Oh the precious juice of the fruit of the vine, wherewith thou refreshest my soul! Is this the blood of the grape? Is it not rather thy blood of the New Testament, that is poured out for me? Thou speakest, O Saviour, of new wine, that thou wouldest drink with thy disciples in thy Father's kingdom: can there be any more precious and pleasant, than this, wherewith thou

cheerest the believing soul? Our palate is now dull and earthly, which shall then be exquisite and celestial; but surely no liquor can be of equal price or sovereignty with thy blood. Oh, how unsavoury are all earthly delicacies, to this heavenly draught! O God, let not the sweet taste of this spiritual nectar ever go out of the mouth of my soul. Let the comfortable warmth of this blessed cordial ever work upon my soul; even till, and in, the last moment of my dissolution.

Dost thou bid me, O Saviour, do this in remembrance of thee? oh! how can I forget thee? how can I enough celebrate thee for this thy unspeakable mercy? Can I see thee thus crucified before my eyes, and for my sake thus crucified, and not remember thee? Can I find my sins accessory to this thy death, and thy death meritoriously expiating all these my grievous sins, and not remember thee? Can I hear thee freely offering thyself to me, and feel thee graciously conveying thyself into my soul, and not remember thee? I do remember thee, O Saviour: but oh that I could yet more effectually remember thee; with all the passionate affections of a soul sick of thy love; with all zealous desires to glorify thee; with all fervent longings after thee and thy salvation! I remember thee in thy suf-

ferings ; oh, do thou remember me, in thy glory.—
The Devout Soul, § 3.

And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him.—St. Luke xxiii. 33.
(*Gospel.*)

O SAVIOUR, I do rather more adore thee on the Calvary of thy Passion, than on the Tabor of thy Transfiguration, or the Olivet of thine Ascension ; and cannot so effectuously bless thee for *Father, glorify me*⁷, as for *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*⁸ ?

See Him, O all ye Beholders, see Him, hanging upon the tree of shame, of curse, to rescue you from curse and confusion, and to feoff you in everlasting blessedness. See Him, stretching out his arms to receive and embrace you ; hanging down his head, to take view of your misery ; opening his precious side, to receive you into his bosom ; opening his very heart, to take you in thither ; pouring out thence, water to wash you, and blood to redeem you. O all ye Nazarites that pass by, out of this dead lion seek and find the true honey of unspeakable and endless comfort.

⁷ John xvii. 5.

⁸ Mat. xxvii. 46.

And ye, great Masters of Israel, whose *lips* profess to *preserve knowledge*, leave all curious and needless disquisitions; and with that divine and ecstatical Doctor of the Gentiles, care only to *know*, to preach, *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*^o.
—*Sermon xxv.*

And the people stood beholding.—St. Luke xxiii. 35.
(*Gospel.*)

WHEN I see my Saviour hanging in so forlorn a fashion upon the Cross: his head drooping down; his temples bleeding with thorns, his hands and feet with the nails, and his side with the spear; his enemies round about Him, mocking at his shame, and insulting over his impotence,—how should I think any otherwise of Him, than, as Himself complaineth, forsaken of his Father? But, when again I turn mine eyes, and see the sun darkened, the earth quaking, the rocks rent, the graves opened, the thief confessing, to give witness to his Deity; and when I see so strong a guard of Providence over Him that all his malicious enemies are not able so much as to break one bone of that body, which seemed carelessly neglected; I cannot but wonder at his glory and

^o See 1 Cor. ii. 2.

safety. God is ever near, though oft unseen; and, if He wink at our distress, He sleepeth not. The sense of others must not be judges of his presence and care; but our faith. What care I if the world give me up for miserable, while I am under his secret protection? O Lord, since thou art strong in our weakness, and present in our senselessness, give me but as much comfort in my sorrow, as thou givest me security, and at my worst I shall be well.—*Meditations and Vows*, Cent. ii. 96.

Good Friday.

He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.
—Heb. x. 9. (*Epistle.*)

CHRIST is the end of the law¹: What law? Ceremonial, Moral. Of the Moral; it was kept perfectly by Himself, satisfied fully for us: of the Ceremonial, it was referred to Him, observed of Him, fulfilled in Him, abolished by Him.

¹ Rom. x. 4.

There were nothing more easy than to show you how all these Jewish ceremonies looked at Christ: how Circumcision, Passover, the Tabernacle, both outer and inner, the Temple, the Laver, both the Altars, the Tables of Shewbread, the Candlesticks, the Veil, the Holy of Holies, the Ark, the Propitiatory, the Pot of Manna, Aaron's Rod, the High Priest, his Order and Line, his Habits, his Inaugurations, his Washings, his Anointings, his Sprinklings, Offerings, the Sacrifices, and whatever Jewish rite, had their virtue from Christ, their relation to Him, and their end in Him.

This was then their last gasp; for now straight they died with Christ, now the veil of the Temple rent: as Austin well notes out of Matthew's order, "It tore then, when Christ's last breath passed."

I say not that all ceremonies are dead, but the Law of ceremonies, and of Jewish. That is a sound distinction of them, which profound Peter Martyr hath in his epistle to that worthy Martyr, Father,—Bishop Hooper;—some are typical, foreshadowing Christ to come; some of order and decency: those are abrogated, not these. The Jews had a fashion of prophesying in the

Churches ; so the Christians from them, as Ambrose : the Jews had an eminent pulpit of wood ; so we : they gave names at their circumcision ; so we at baptism : they sung psalms melodiously in Churches ; so do we : they paid and received tithes ; so do we : they wrapped their dead in linen with odours ; so we : the Jews had sureties at their admission into the Church ; so we : these instances might be infinite ; the Spouse of Christ cannot be without her laces and chains and borders. Christ came not to dissolve order. But thou, O Lord, how long ; how long shall thy poor Church find her ornaments her sorrows ? and see the dear sons of her womb bleeding about these apples of strife ? Let me so name them not for their value (even small things, where they are commanded, look for no small respect), but for their event. The enemy is at the gates of our Syracuse ; how long will we suffer ourselves to be taken up with angles and circles in the dust !
—*Sermon ii.*

He said, It is finished : and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.—St. John xix. 30. (*Gospel.*)

HEAR this, thou languishing and afflicted soul : there is not one of thy sins, but it is paid for ; not one of thy debts, in the scroll of God, but it is

crossed ; not one farthing of all thine infinite ransom is unpaid. Alas, thy sins, thou sayest, are ever before thee, and God's indignation goes still over thee ; and thou goest mourning all the day long, and, with that pattern of distress, criest out, in the bitterness of thy soul, *I have sinned ; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men*² ? What shouldst thou do ? turn and believe. Now thou art stung in thy conscience with this fiery serpent, look up with the eyes of faith to this Brazen Serpent, Christ Jesus, and be healed. Behold his head is humbly bowed down in a gracious respect to thee ; his arms are stretched out lovingly to embrace thee : yea his precious side is open to receive thee, and his tongue interprets all these to thee for thine endless comfort. *It is finished.* There is no more accusation, judgment, death, hell for thee : all these are no more to thee, than if they were not : *Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died*³.

Is thy heart wounded with thy sin ? doth grief and hatred strive within thee whether shall be more ? Are the desires of thy soul with God ? Dost thou long for holiness, complain of thy im-

² Job vii. 20.

³ Rom. viii. 34.

perfections, struggle against thy corruptions? Thou art the man, fear not : *It is finished.* That Law, which thou wouldst have kept and couldest not, thy Saviour could and did keep for thee : that salvation which thou couldest never work out alone, (alas, poor impotent creatures, what can we do towards heaven without Him, which cannot move on earth but in Him?) He alone for thee hath finished. Look up, therefore, boldly to the throne of God ; and, upon the truth of thy repentance and faith, know that there is no quarrel against thee in heaven, nothing but peace and joy. All is finished. He would be spitted on, that He might wash thee : He would be covered with scornful robes, that thy sins might be covered : He would be whipped, that thy soul might not be scourged eternally : He would thirst, that thy soul might be satisfied : He would bear all his Father's wrath, that thou mightest bear none : He would yield to death, that thou mightest never taste of it : He would be in sense for a time as forsaken of his Father, that thou mightest be received for ever.—*Sermon ii.*

It is finished.—St. John xix. 30. (*Gospel.*)

It is finished. Now there is no more betray-

ing, agonies, arraignments, scourging, scoffing, crucifying; conflicts, terrors; all is finished.

Alas, beloved! and will we not let the Son of God be at rest? Do we now again go about to fetch Him out of his glory to scorn and crucify Him? I fear to say it: God's Spirit dare and doth; *They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame*⁴. to themselves, not in Himself; that they cannot, it is no thank to them; they would do it. See, and consider; the notoriously sinful conversations of those that should be Christians offer violence unto our glorified Saviour; they stretch their hand to heaven, and pull Him down from his throne to his cross; they tear Him with thorns, pierce Him with nails, load Him with reproaches.

O beloved, is it not enough that He died once for us? Were those pains so light, that we should every day redouble them? Is this the entertainment that so gracious a Saviour hath deserved of us by dying? Is this the recompence of that infinite love of his that thou shouldest thus cruelly vex and wound Him with thy sins? Every of our sins is a thorn and nail, and spear to Him.

⁴ Heb. vi. 6.

In Himself, it is finished ; in his members, it is not, till the world be finished. We must toil, and groan, and bleed, that we may reign : if He had not done so, it had not been finished. This is our warfare ; this is the region of our sorrow and death. Now are we set upon the sandy pavement of our theatre, and are matched with all sorts of evils : evil men, evil spirits, evil accidents ; and which is worst, our own evil hearts ; temptations, crosses, persecutions, sicknesses, wants, infamies, death, all these must, in our courses, be encountered by the law of our profession. What should we do but strive and suffer, as our General hath done, that we may reign as He doth ? God and his angels sit upon the scaffolds of heaven and behold us : our crown is ready ; our day of deliverance shall come ; yea, our redemption is near, when all tears shall be wiped from our eyes ; and we that have sown in tears shall reap in joy. In the mean time, let us possess our souls, not in patience only, but in comfort : let us adore and magnify our Saviour in his sufferings, and imitate Him in our own : our sorrows shall have an end, our joys shall not ; our pains shall soon be finished ; our glory shall be finished, but never ended.—*Sermon ii.*

Easter Even.

Christ . . hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.—1 Peter iii. 18. (*Epistle.*)

O BLESSED Jesu ! how easily have carnal eyes mistaken the passages and intentions of this thy last and most glorious work ! Our weakness could hitherto see nothing here but pain and ignominy ; now, my better enlightened eyes see, in this elevation of thine, both honour and happiness. Lo, thou that art the Mediator betwixt God and men, the Reconciler of heaven and earth, art lift up betwixt earth and heaven, that thou mightest accord both. Thou that art the great Captain of our Salvation, the Conqueror of all the adverse powers of death and hell, art exalted upon this triumphal chariot of the cross, that thou mightest trample upon death, and drag all those infernal principalities manacled after thee. Those Arms, which thine enemies meant violently to extend, are stretched forth for the embracing of all mankind, that shall come in for

the benefit of thy all-sufficient redemption.—
Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv.
Con. 32.

And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.—
St. Matthew xxvii. 59, 60. (*Gospel.*)

O SAVIOUR, the earth was thine and the fullness of it; yet, as thou hadst not a house of thine own while thou livedst, so thou hadst not a grave when thou wert dead. Joseph, that rich counsellor, lent thee his; lent it so as it should never be restored. Thou tookest it but for a while; but that little touch of that sacred corpse of thine made it too good for the owner.

How full of terrors and inevitable perplexities is guiltiness! These men were not more troubled with envy at Christ alive than now with fear of his resurrection. And what can now secure them? Pilate had helped to kill Him; but who shall keep Him from rising?

Wicked and foolish Jews! how fain would ye fight against God and your own hearts! How gladly would ye deceive yourselves, in believing

Him to be a deceiver whom your consciences knew to be no less true than powerful! Lazarus was still in your eye. That man was no phantasm. His death, his reviving, was undeniable. The so fresh resuscitation of that dead body, after four days' dissolution, was a manifest conviction of Omnipotence. How do ye vainly wish that He could deceive you in the pre-reporting of his own resurrection! Without a Divine power He could have raised neither Lazarus nor Himself; with and by it He could as well raise Himself as Lazarus. What need we other witnesses than your own mouths? That which He would do, ye confess He foretold; that the truth of his word might answer the power of this deed, and both of them might argue Him the God of truth and power, and yourselves enemies to both.

And now, what must be done? The sepulchre must be secured and you with it. A huge stone, a strong guard, must do the deed; and that stone must be sealed, that guard of your own designing. Methinks I hear the soldiers and busy officers, when they were rolling away that other weighty stone (for such we probably conceive) to the mouth of the vault with much toil and sweat and breathlessness, how they bragged of the sureness of the place and unremoveable-

ness of that load; and when that so choice a watch was set, how they boasted of their valour and vigilance, and said they would make Him safe from either rising or stealing.

Oh the madness of impotent men, that think, by either will or force, to frustrate the will and designs of the Almighty! How justly doth that wise and powerful arbiter of the world laugh them to scorn in heaven, and befool them in their own vain devices! O Saviour, how much evidence had thy Resurrection wanted, if these enemies had not been thus maliciously provident! How irrefragable is thy rising made, by these bootless endeavours of their prevention!—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 33.*

Easter Day.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.—Col. iii. 1. (*Epistle.*)

If Heaven can be capable of an increase of joy and felicity, never had those blessed spirits

so great a cause of triumph and gratulation as in this day of Christ's glorious Resurrection. How much more, O Dear Jesu, should we men, whose flesh thou didst assume, unite, revive, for whose sake, and in whose stead, thou didst vouchsafe to suffer and die, whose arrearages thou payedst in death and acquittedst in thy Resurrection, whose souls are discharged, whose bodies shall be raised by the power of thy rising; how much more should we think we have cause to be overjoyed with the happy memory of this great work of thy divine Power and unconceivable Mercy!

Lo now, how weak soever I am in myself, yet, in the confidence of this victorious Resurrection of my Saviour, I dare boldly challenge and defy you, O all ye adverse powers. Do the worst ye can to my soul; in despite of you, it shall be safe.

Is it Sin that threatens me? Behold! this resurrection of my Redeemer publishes my discharge. My surety was arrested, and cast into the prison of his grave. Had not the utmost farthing of mine arrearages been paid, He could not have come forth. He is come forth: the sum is fully satisfied. What danger can there be of a discharged debt?

Is it the Wrath of God? Wherefore is that

but for Sin? If my sin be defrayed, that quarrel is at an end; and if my Saviour suffered it for me, how can I fear to suffer it in myself? That infinite Justice hates to be twice paid. He is risen; therefore He hath satisfied, *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again*⁵.

Is it Death itself? Lo, my Saviour, that overcame Death by dying, hath triumphed over him in his Resurrection. How can I now fear a conquered enemy? What harm is there in the Serpent, but for his sting? *The sting of death is sin*⁶; that is pulled out by my powerful Redeemer; it cannot now hurt me; it may refresh me to carry this cool snake in my bosom.

O then, my dear Saviour, I bless thee for thy Death; but I bless thee more for thy Resurrection. That was a work of wonderful humility, of infinite mercy; this was a work of infinite power: in that, was human weakness; in this, Divine Omnipotence: in that, thou didst die for our sins; in this, thou didst rise again for our justification⁷.

And now, how am I conformable to thee; if,

⁵ Rom. viii. 34.

⁶ 1 Cor. xv. 56.

⁷ See Rom. iv. 25.

when thou art risen, I lie still in the grave of my corruptions? How am I a limb of thy body, if, while thou hast that perfect dominion over death, death hath dominion over me; if, while thou art alive and glorious, I lie rotting in the dust of death? I know the locomotive faculty is in the head: by the power of the resurrection of thee, our head, all we thy members cannot but be raised. As the earth cannot hold my body from thee in the day of the Second Resurrection, so cannot sin withhold my soul from thee in the first. How am I thine, if I be not risen? And *if I be risen with thee, why do I not seek those things which are above, where thou sittest on the right hand of God.*—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 33.*

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.—Col. iii. 2. (*Epistle.*)

If we love the world more than God, if we hate any enemy more than sin, if we grieve at any loss more than of the favour of God, if we joy in any thing more than the writing of our names in heaven, if we fear any thing more than offence, if we hope for any thing more than salvation; and, much more, if we change objects,

loving what we should hate, joying in what we should grieve at, hoping for what we should fear, and the contrary; in one word, if our desires and affections be earthly, grovelling, sensual, not spiritual, sublime, heavenly; we fall into the damnable passion of the world. Away, therefore, with all evil concupiscence, all ambitious affectations, all spiteful emulations, all worldly sorrows, all cowardly fears, all carnal heats of false joy. Let the world dote upon vanity, and follow after lies; let our *affections and conversation be above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God*^s. Let the base earth-worms of this world be taken up with the best of this vain trash: the desires of us Christians must soar aloft, and fix themselves upon those objects which may make us perfectly and unchangeably blessed.—*Sermon xviii.*

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre.—St. John xx. 1. (*Gospel.*)

LOVE is restless and fearless. In the dark of night, these good women go to buy their spices; and ere the day break, are gone out of their houses towards the tomb of Christ to bestow

^s See Phil. iii. 20; Col. iii. 1.

them. This sex is commonly fearful: it was much for them to walk alone, in that unsafe season; yet, as despising all fears and dangers, they thus spend the night after their sabbath. Might they have been allowed to bury their perfumes on the sabbath, or to have visited that holy tomb sooner, can we think they would have stayed so long? Can we suppose they would have cared more for the sabbath, than for the *Lord of the Sabbath*⁹, who now kept his sabbath in the grave? Sooner they might not come, later they would not, to present their last homage to their dead Saviour. Had these holy women known their Jesus to be alive, how had they hastened, who made such speed to do their last offices to his sacred corpse! For us, we *know that our Redeemer liveth*¹; we know where He is. O Saviour, how cold and heartless is our love to thee, if we do not haste to find thee in thy word and sacraments; if our souls do not fly up to thee, in all holy affections, into thy heaven.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 33.*

⁹ Mark ii. 28.

¹ See Job xix. 25.

Monday in Easter Week.

Him God raised up the third day. . . . And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.—Acts x. 40. 42. (*Epistle.*)

O THE marvellous pomp and magnificence of our Saviour's resurrection! The earth quakes, the angel appears; that it may be plainly seen that this divine Person now rising had the command both of earth and heaven. At the dissolution of thy human nature, O Saviour, was an earthquake; at the reuniting of it, is an earthquake: to tell the world that the God of Nature then suffered, and had now conquered. While thou layest still in the earth, the earth was still; when thou camest to fetch thine own, *The earth trembled at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob*². When thou, our true Sampson, awakedst, and foundest thyself tied with these Philistine cords, and rousedst up and brakest those hard and strong twists with

² See Ps. cxiv. 7.

a sudden power, no marvel if the room shook under thee.

Good cause had the earth to quake, when the God that made it powerfully calls for his own flesh from the usurpation of her bowels. Good cause had she to open her graves, and yield up her dead in attendance to the Lord of Life, whom she had presumed to detain in that cell of her darkness.

What a seeming impotency was here, that thou who art the true Rock of thy Church, shouldest lie obscurely shrouded in Joseph's rock! Thou, that art the true corner stone of thy Church, shouldest be shut up with a double stone; the one of thy grave, the other of thy vault! Thou, by whom we are *sealed unto the day of redemption*³, shouldest be sealed up in a blind cavern of earth! But now, what a demonstration of power doth both the world and I see in thy glorious Resurrection! The rocks tear; the graves open; the stones roll away; the dead rise and appear; the soldiers flee and tremble; saints and angels attend thy rising. O Saviour, thou layest down in weakness, thou risest in power and glory: thou layest down like a man, thou risest like a God.

³ Eph. iv. 30.

What a lively image hast thou herein given me, of the dreadful majesty of the general resurrection and thy second appearance! Then, not the earth only, but *the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken*⁴: not some few graves shall be open and some saints appear, but all the bars of death shall be broken, and *all that sleep in their graves shall awake, and stand up from the dead*⁵ before thee: not some one angel shall descend, but thou, *the great Angel of the Covenant*⁶, attended with thousand thousands of those mighty spirits. And if these stout soldiers were so filled with terror at the feeling of an earthquake and the sight of an angel, that they had scarce breath left in them for the time to witness them alive,—where shall thine enemies appear, O Lord, in the day of thy terrible appearance, when the earth shall reel and vanish, and the elements shall be in a flame about their ears, and the heavens shall wrap up as a scroll?—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 33.*

⁴ Mark xiii. 25.⁵ See Dan. xii. 2.⁶ See Mal. iii. 1.

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory ?—St. Luke xxiv. 26. (*Gospel.*)

Lo, death truly swallowed up in victory ! Neither is it otherwise proportionally with us : wholly so it cannot be. For, as for Him, death did but taste of Him, could not devour Him, much less put Him over : it could not but yield Him whole and entire the third day, without any impairing of his nature ; yea, with a happy addition to it,—of a glorious immortality ; and, in that glorified humanity, He ascended by his own power into his heaven. For us, we must be content, that one part of us lie rotting, for the time, in the dust ; while our spiritual part shall, by the ministry of angels, be received up to those everlasting habitations. Here is an assumption therefore, true and happy, though not, as yet, total. And why should I not, therefore, have my heart taken up with the assured expectation of this receiving up into my glory ? Why do I not look beyond death, at the eternally blessed condition of this soul of mine ; which, in my dissolution, is thus crowned with immortality ? So doth the sea-beaten mariner cheer up himself with the sight of that haven which he makes for. So doth the traveller comfort himself, when,

after a tempestuous storm, he sees the sun breaking forth in his brightness. I am dying, but, O Saviour, thou art *the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in thee, though he were dead, yet shall he live*⁷. *Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead*⁸. *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them*⁹.—*Select Thoughts*, lxvi.

Tuesday in Easter Week.

God raised him from the dead: and he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.—Acts xiii. 30, 31. (*Epistle*.)

It stood not with thy purpose, O Saviour, to ascend immediately from the grave into heaven.

⁷ See John xi. 25.

⁸ Isa. xxvi. 19.

⁹ Rev. xiv. 13.

Thou meantest to take the earth in thy way ; not for a sudden passage, but for a leisurely conversation. Upon thy Easter Day thou spakest of thine ascension ; but thou wouldst ~~have~~ **hadst** forty days interposed. ~~Hadst~~ thou merely respected **thy own** glory, thou hadst instantly changed thy grave for thy Paradise ; for so much the sooner hadst thou been possessed of thy Father's joy ; we would not continue in a dungeon when we might be in a palace ; but thou, who for our sakes vouchsafedst to descend from heaven to earth, wouldst now in the upshot have a gracious regard to us in thy return.

Thy death had troubled the hearts of many disciples, who thought that condition too mean to be compatible with the glory of the Messiah ; and thoughts of diffidence were apt to seize upon the holiest breasts. So long, therefore, wouldst thou hold footing upon earth till the world were fully convinced of the infallible evidences of thy resurrection ; of all which time, thou only canst give an account. It was not for flesh and blood to trace the ways of Immortality ; neither was our frail, corruptible, sinful nature a meet companion for thy now glorified humanity : the glorious angels of heaven were now thy fittest attendants. But yet, how oft did it please thee

graciously to impart thyself this while unto men ; and not only to appear unto thy disciples, but to renew unto them the familiar forms of thy wonted conversation, in conferring, walking, eating with them ! And now when thou drewest near to thy last parting, thou, who hadst many times showed thyself before to thy several disciples, thoughtest meet to assemble them all together, for a universal valediction.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 34.*

Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.—St. Luke xxiv. 36. (*Gospel.*)

If all the angels of heaven should have said so, we should soon have replied, as Korah and his company did to Moses and Aaron, *Ye take too much upon you*¹. This work is not for any finite power. The style of peace, is *The peace of God*² ; the style of God, the Mediator betwixt God and Man, is *The Prince of Peace*³. He is the true Solomon ; the other was but typical. It is He only that, when the disciples were tossed with contrary winds and threatening billows, could command the winds and waves to a calm.

¹ Num. xvi. 3.

² Phil. iv. 7.

³ Isa. ix. 6.

It is He only that, when his Church is tossed with the winds and waves of raging and impetuous enmity, can give outward peace. It is He only, that, when the distressed soul is tossed with the winds and waves of strong temptation, of weak diffidence, can give inward peace. Justly, therefore, doth He challenge this act as his own.—*Sermon xi.*

Why are we appalled when we see the measures of the sons of Anak,—the spiritual wickednesses in heavenly places? If we look at their numbers, they are Legions; if to their strength, they are Principalities and Powers; if to their nature, they are Spirits that rule in the air. We are men, flesh and blood, single, weak, sinful. Whatever we are, *Our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased*⁴. He is the Lord of Hosts. Though cowards in ourselves, yet in Him we are *more than conquerors*⁵. He who is more than all power, than all truth, hath said it: *The gates of hell shall not prevail against*⁶ his Church. *Thanks be to God, which*

⁴ Ps. cxv. 3.⁵ Rom. viii. 37.⁶ Mat. xvi. 18.

*giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*⁷.

Lastly, He is the Lord of Hosts: his undertakings are infallible. Hath He said, that the glory of the evangelical Church shall exceed the legal? Hath He said, that, *In this place he will give peace*⁸? How can the Church fail of glory or the soul of peace? His word can be no more defective than Himself impotent. Trust God with his own causes; trust Him with thyself: do that He bids; expect what He promises: frequent this house of his; wait on his ordinances. The Lord of Hosts shall give thee that *peace, which passeth all understanding*⁹; and with peace, Glory, in that Upper House of his, *not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*¹⁰.— *Sermon xi.*

⁷ 1 Cor. xv. 57.

⁸ See Hag. ii. 9.

⁹ Phil. iv. 7.

¹⁰ 2 Cor. v. 1.

The First Sunday after Easter.

Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.—1 St. John v. 4. (*Epistle.*)

WE talk of mighty warriors that have done great exploits in conquering kingdoms, but the Spirit of God tells us of a greater conquest than all theirs: *Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* Alas! the conquest of those great commanders was but poor and partial,—of some small spots of the earth; the conquest of a regenerate Christian is universal,—of the whole world. Those other conquerors, while they prevailed abroad, were yet overcome at home; and, while they were the lords of the nations, were no other than vassals to their own lusts; but these begin their victories at home, and enlarge their triumphs over all their spiritual enemies. The glory of those other victors was laid down with their bodies in the dust: the glory that attends these is eternal. What pity it is that the true Christian should not know his own

greatness: that he may raise his thoughts accordingly, and bear himself as one that tramples the world under his feet! *For all that is in the world, is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*¹: these he hath truly subdued in himself; not so as to bereave them of life, but of rule; if he have left them some kind of being still in him, yet he hath left them no dominion; and therefore may well style himself the lord of the world. Far, far therefore be it from him that he should so abject and debase himself as to be a slave to his vassals: none but holy and high thoughts and demeanours may now beseem him; and, in these spiritual regards of his inward greatness and self-conquests, his word must be, “Either Cæsar or nothing.” — *Select Thoughts*, lx.

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.—1 St. John v. 12. (*Epistle*.)

HE that lives in God cannot be weary of his life, because he ever finds both somewhat to do and somewhat to solace himself with: he cannot be overloth to part with it, because he shall enter into a nearer life and society with that God in

¹ 1 John ii. 16.

whom he delighteth. Whereas, he that lives without Him, lives many times uncomfortable here ; because, partly, he knows not any cause of joy in himself, and partly, he finds not any worthy employment to while himself withal : and he dies miserably, because he either knows not whither he goes, or knows he goes to torment. There is no true life but the life of faith. O Lord, let me live out of the world with thee, if thou wilt ; but let me not live in the world without thee.—*Meditations and Vows, Cent. iii. 89.*

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.—St. John xx. 21—23. (*Gospel.*)

THOSE disciples, whose flight scattered them upon their Master's apprehension, are now, at night, like a dispersed covey, met together by their mutual call : their assembly is secret ; when the light was shut in, when *the doors were shut* up. Still were they fearful ; still were the Jews malicious. The assured tidings of their Master's resurrection and life, have filled their

hearts with joy and wonder. While their thoughts and speech are taken up with so happy a subject, his miraculous and sudden presence bids their senses be witnesses of his reviving and their happiness. *When the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you*².

O Saviour, how thou camest in thither, I wonder; I inquire not: I know not what a glorified body can do. I know there is nothing that thou canst not do. Had not thine entrance been recorded for strange and supernatural, why was thy standing in the midst noted before thy passage into the room? Why were the doors said to be shut, while thou camest in? Why were thy disciples amazed to see thee, ere they heard thee? Doubtless, they that once before took thee for a spirit when thou didst walk upon the waters, could not but be astonished to see thee while the doors were barred, without any noise of thine entrance to stand in the midst: well might they think thou couldst not thus be there, if thou wert not the God of Spirits.

'Twere here seem more scruple of thy reality,

² John xx. 19.

than of thy power; and, therefore, after thy wonted greeting, thou showest them thy hands and thy feet stamped with the impressions of thy late sufferings. Thy respiration shall argue the truth of thy life. Thou breathest on them, as a Man; thou givest them thy Spirit, as a God; and, as God and Man, thou sendest them on the great errand of thy Gospel.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 33.*

The Second Sunday after Easter.

Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.—1 St. Peter ii. 21—23. (*Epistle.*)

O SAVIOUR, let me not forget to admire those sweet mercies of thine which thou pouredst out upon thy persecutors. They rejoice in thy death, and triumph in thy misery, and scoff at thee in both: instead of calling down fire from heaven

upon them, thou heapest coals of fire upon their heads : *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*³. They blaspheme thee ; thou prayest for them : they scorn ; thou pitiest : they sin against thee ; thou prayest for their forgiveness : they profess their malice ; thou pleadest their ignorance. O compassion without example, without measure, fit for the Son of God, the Saviour of Men ! Wicked and foolish Jews ! ye would be miserable ; He will not let you : ye would fain pull upon yourselves the guilt of his blood ; He deprecates it : ye kill ; He sues for your remission and life. His tongue cries louder than his blood, *Father, forgive them*. O Saviour, thou couldst not but be heard. Those who out of ignorance and simplicity thus persecuted thee, find the happy issue of thine intercession. Now I see whence it was that three thousand souls were converted soon after at one sermon. It was not Peter's speech, it was thy prayer, that was thus effectual. Now they have grace to know and confess whence they have both forgiveness and salvation, and can recompense their blasphemies with thanksgiving. What sin is there, Lord, whereof I can despair of the re-

³ Luke xxiii. 34.

mission, or what offence can I be unwilling to remit, when thou prayest for the forgiveness of thy murderers and blasphemers.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 32.*

Jesus said, I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. . . . And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.—St. John x. 11. 16. (*Gospel.*)

LORD Jesu, who should enjoy the fruit of thine own favours but thyself? How shamefully injurious were it, that, when thou hast trimmed up my soul, it should prostitute itself to the love of the world! Oh take my heart to thee alone; possess thyself of that, which none can claim but thyself!

Thou lovedst me when I was a professed rebel against thee; and receivedst me, not to mercy only, but to the endearment of a subject, a servant, a son; where should I place the improvement of the thankful affections of my loyalty and duty, but upon thee?

Thou, O God, hast so loved us, that thou wouldest become the Son of Man for our sakes; that we, who are the sons of men, might become

the sons of God. Oh that we could put off the old man to put on Christ, that we could neglect and hate ourselves for thee, that hast so dearly loved us as to lay aside thy heavenly glory for us!

How shall I be vile enough, O Saviour, for thee; who, for my sake, being the Lord of life and glory, wouldest take upon thee the shape of a servant! How should I welcome that poverty, which thy choice hath sanctified! How resolutely shall I grapple with the temptations of that enemy, whom thou hast foiled for me! How cheerfully should I pass through those miseries and that death, which thou hast sweetened! With what comfortable assurance shall I look upon the face of that merciful justice, which thou hast satisfied!

But oh, what a blessed inheritance hast thou, in thine infinite love, provided for me! *an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven*⁴ for me: so as, when my *earthly house of this tabernacle* shall be dissolved, I have a *building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*⁵. A house? Yea, a palace of heavenly state and magnificence. Neither is it less than a kingdom, that abides there for me: a kingdom, so much

⁴ 1 Pet. i. 4.

⁵ 2 Cor. v. 1.

more above these worldly monarchies as heaven is above this clod of earth.

Now, Lord, what conceits, what affections of mind, can be in the least sort answerable to so transcendent mercy? If some friend shall have been pleased to bestow some mean legacy upon me, or shall have feoffed⁶ me in some few acres of his land, how deeply do I find myself obliged to the love and memory of so kind a benefactor! O then, Lord, how can my soul be capable of those thoughts and dispositions, which may reach to the least proportion of thine infinite bounty; who of a poor worm on earth, hast made me an heir of the kingdom of heaven?

Woe is me, how subject are these earthly principalities to hazard and mutability, whether through death or insurrection! but this crown, which thou hast laid up for me is immarcessible⁷; and shall sit immoveably fast upon my head, not for years, nor for millions of ages, but for all eternity. Oh let it be my heaven here below, in the mean while, to live in a perpetual fruition of thee; and to begin those hallelujahs to thee here, which shall be as endless as thy mercy and my blessedness.—*Meditation on the Love of Christ*, § 11.

⁶ *Feoffed*, put in possession. ⁷ *Immarcessible*, unfading.

The Third Sunday after Easter.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.
—1 St. Peter ii. 11. (*Epistle.*)

O LORD my God, I am as very a pilgrim as ever walked upon thy earth: why should I look to be in any better condition than my neighbours, than my forefathers? Even the best of them that were most fixed upon their inheritance, were no other than strangers at home; it was not in the power of the world to naturalize them; much less, to make them enrol themselves free denizens here below: they knew that their country, which they sought, was above; so infinitely rich and pleasant, that these earthly regions, which they must pass through, are in comparison worthy of nothing but contempt^s. My condition is no other than theirs: I wander here, in a strange country; what wonder is it if I meet with foreigner's fare, hard usage and neglect? Why do I intermeddle with the affairs of a nation that is not mine? Why do I clog myself, in my way, with the base and heavy lumber of the world? Why are not my

^s See Heb. xi. 13—15.

affections homeward? Why do I not long to see and enjoy my Father's home? O my God, thou, that hast put me into the state of a pilgrim, give me a pilgrim's heart, set me off from this wretched world wherein I am: let me hate to think of dwelling here; let it be my only care how to pass through this miserable wilderness to the promised land of a blessed eternity.—*The Breathings of the Devout Soul*, xxxvii.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.—St. John xvi. 20. (*Gospel*.)

WHY do I not thus argue with myself in my sufferings? Is it not the hand of my good God that lies thus heavy upon me? Can I but acknowledge Him to be a God of infinite wisdom and infinite mercy? If of infinite wisdom, how can He but know what is best for me? If of infinite mercy, how can He but do what He knows to be best? And, if it be best for me to suffer, why should I not be cheerful in suffering? What do I looking to second hands? This man, that beast; this fever, that tempest; this fire, that inundation, are but his rods: the hand is his, that wields them: their malignity is their own: nothing but goodness

proceeds from Him that useth them to my advantage : *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*⁷. If but as a creature, O God, thou hast full right to dispose of me as thou wilt ; I am thy clay, fashion me as thou pleasest : but, as thy redeemed one, as thine adopted one, I have full and dear interest in thee as a Father ; and thou canst be no other than thyself. Let it not be enough for me to hold my peace, because thou Lord hast done it ; but let me break silence in praising thy Name for that thou *in faithfulness* and *love hast afflicted me*⁸. The *fathers of our flesh*⁹, even though they whip us unduly and out of passion, yet we kneel to their persons, and cling to their knees, and kiss their rods ; how much more should I adore thine infinite goodness, in all thy holy, righteous, merciful corrections. It is for a slave to grudge at the scourges of a cruel master ; he is not worthy to pass for thy child that receives not thy stripes with a reverent meekness. Tears may be here allowed ; but a reluctant frown were no better than rebellion. Let infidels then and ignorants, who think they suffer by chance, and impute all their crosses to

⁷ 1 Sam. iii. 18.⁸ Ps. cxix. 75.⁹ Heb. xii. 9.

the next hand, looking no higher than their own heads, repine at their adversities, and be dejected with their afflictions : for me, who know that I have a Father in Heaven, full of mercy and compassion, whose providence hath measured out to a scruple the due proportions of my sorrows, counting my sighs and reserving the tears which He wrings from me in his bottle ; why do I not patiently lie down and put my *mouth in the dust*¹, meekly submitting to his holy pleasure, and blessing the hand from which I smart ?—*Songs in the Night*, § 3.

The Fourth Sunday after Easter.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.—St. James i. 17. (*Epistle.*)

HAD not the Apostle said so, yet our own sense

¹ Lam. iii. 29.

and experience would have told us that *every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights*; for, sure, from below it cannot come. How should any perfect gift arise from the region of all imperfection? How should evil afford any good? What is below but earth and hell? Whereof the one yields nothing but torment, the other nothing but misery and sin. If therefore, it be perfect or good, since nothing can give what it hath not, it must needs come from above. And, from whom, above? Not from those lightsome bodies of the stars, whose influences cannot reach unto the soul; whose substance is not capable of any spiritual power, whether to have or give perfect gifts: not from the blessed spirits, which are angels of light: they may help, through God's gracious appointment, to convey blessings to us; but they neither will nor can challenge an original and primary interest in the blessings which they convey: only, therefore, from the Father of lights; who, as He is light, so is the Author of all lights whatsoever, both inward and outward, spiritual and sensible. Whence then, O whence, can I look for any good thing, but from thy hands, O my God, who *givest to all men liberally and*

*upbraideſt not*²: whose infinite treasure is not capable of any diminution ; ſince, the more thou givest, thy ſtore is not the leſs, thy glory more ? Thou doſt not ſell thy favours, as we men are apt to do, looking through our ſmall bounty at an expected retribution ; but thou givest moſt freely, moſt abſolutely : neither doſt thou lend thy beſt bleſſings, as looking to receive them back again, but ſo conveyeſt them to us, as to make them our own for ever : ſince, therefore, thy gifts are ſo free that all thy heavenly riches may be had for asking, how worthy ſhall I be to want them, if I do not ſue for them to the throne of thy grace ! Yet, even this, ſince it is a good thing, I cannot do, without thee ! Oh, then, give thou me the grace that I may be ever begging faithfully of thee and give me the graces that I beg for.—*Soliloquies*, xlix.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth ; It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you.—St. John xvi. 7. (*Gospel.*)

SOLITUDE is a cheerleſs thing. Yet times

² See James i. 5.

there may be, when society (if we should meet with bad companions) would vex us, even more than solitude. To have lit upon an honest, cheerful, eloquent companion, is generally deemed no small advantage; such an one shortens our journey, and lessens our fatigue. Well then, how pleasant must it be to us, always to be engaged with Him whose title is the Comforter ! Certainly, were it not that He possesses an inexhaustible fountain of most sure comfort; were it not that no true comfort can proceed from any but from Him; that title of Paraclete, or Comforter, which He so justly challenges for Himself alone, would but very ill suit Him. Even those consolations, such as they are, which proceed either from natural reason, or moral resolution, are none other than the common influences of this Spirit of Comfort; without whose inward operation no breast can glow with any substantial joy. How wretched are the methods of vain consolation which he who walks with the world devises for himself ! One man congratulates himself in secret, and says, "Come, I have a strong body and good health;" another, "I have an unblemished reputation, and an excellent character among my neighbours;" another, "I have a

great friend and patron at court;" another, "I have boards of money at home." But alas! alas! when the dreadful day of calamity approaches, what will become of all these things? *Miserable comforters are ye all*³, shall the soul, weighed down with anguish, exclaim; and shall be forced at length, though perhaps too late, to confess that no true satisfaction can ever be expected, but from the Father of all mercies and the God of all comfort: with whom, when we have learnt to walk, we shall cheerfully sing, with the royal shepherd of Israel: *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters*⁴.—*Way of Enoch; or, Walking with God.*

³ Job xvi. 2.

⁴ Ps. xxiii. 1, 2.

The Fifth Sunday after Easter.

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.—St. James i. 22. (*Epistle.*)

It is easy to observe that there are five degrees of the digestion of our spiritual food. First, it is received into the cell of the ear, and there digested by a careful attention; then it is conveyed into the brain, and there concocted by due meditation; from thence it is sent down into the heart, and there digested by the affections; and from thence it is conveyed to the tongue in conference and holy confession; and lastly, it is thence transmitted to the hand, and there receives perfect digestion in our action and performance. And, as the life and health of the body cannot be maintained, except the material food pass through all the degrees of bodily concoction, no more can the soul live and prosper, in the want of any of those spiritual degrees of digestion: and, as where the food is perfectly concocted, the body grows fat and vigorous; so it is with the soul where the spiritual repast is thus kindly digested.

Were there not failings in all these degrees,

the souls of men would not be so meagre and unthriving as they are. Some there are that will not give so much as ear-room to the word of truth; such are willing recusants. Others will admit it perhaps so far, but there let it rest; these are fashionable auditors. Some others can be content to let it enter into the brain, and take up some place in their thoughts and memories; these are speculative professors. Some, but fewer, others let it down into their hearts and there entertain it with secret liking, but hide it in their bosoms, not daring to make profession of it to the world; these are close Nicodemians. Others take it into their mouths, and busy their tongues in holy chat, yet do nothing; these are formal discourses. But, alas, how few are there, whose hands speak louder than their tongues;—that conscientiously hear, meditate, affect, speak, do the word of their Maker and Redeemer!—*Select Thoughts*, xlviii.

These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.—St. John xvi. 33. (*Gospel*.)

FLY about whither thou wilt, O thou weary dove, through all the wide regions of the heavens

and waters, thou shalt no where find rest for the soles of thy feet, but in the ark of Christ's perfect righteousness. In vain shalt thou seek it in schools of morality, in learned libraries, in spacious fields and forests, in pleasant gardens, in sullen retiredness, in witty conversation, in wanton theatres, in drunken cellars, in tables of gluttony, in beds of lust, chests of mammon, whiffs and draughts of intoxication, songs of ribaldry, sports of recreation. No, no; the more thou seekest it in most of these, the farther it flies from thee, the farther thou art from finding it; and, if these things may give some poor truce to thy thoughts, it shall soon end in a more direful war. *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked*⁵.

Stray whither thou wilt, O thou wounded hart, through the lands and wood: alas, the shaft sticks still in thee; or if that be shaken out, the head. None but the sovereign dittany of thy Saviour's righteousness, can drive it out; and, till it be out, thou canst have no peace. In plain terms; wouldst thou have peace? None but Christ can give it thee. He will give it to none but the penitent, none but the faithful. Oh,

⁵ Isa. lvii. 21.

spend thyself into the sighs and tears of true repentance ; and then raise thy humbled soul to a lively confidence in thine all-sufficient Redeemer. Set thy Lord Jesus betwixt God and thy sins. God cannot see thy debt but through thine acquittance. By his stripes we are healed : by his wounds we are staunched : by his death we are quickened : by his righteousness we are discharged. The work of his righteousness is our peace. O safe and blessed condition of believers ! Let sin, Satan, world, death, hell, do their worst ; *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us⁶.* Our enemy is now our Father ; our Judge is our Saviour ; the Offended our Surety ; that precious blood our Ransom ; that perfect Righteousness our everlasting Peace.—*Sermon xiii.*

⁶ Rom. viii. 33, 34.

The Ascension Day.

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.—Acts i. 9. (*Epistle.*)

O MY soul, be thou now, if ever, ravished with the contemplation of this comfortable and blessed farewell of thy Saviour. What a sight was this; how full of joyful assurance, of spiritual consolation! Methinks I see it still with their eyes; how thou, my Glorious Saviour, didst leisurely and insensibly rise up from thine Olivet; taking leave of thine acclaiming disciples now left below thee, with gracious eyes, with heavenly benedictions. Methinks I see how they followed thee with eager and longing eyes, with arms lifted up, as if they had wished them winged, to have soared up after thee. And if Elijah gave assurance to his servant Elisha, that, if he should behold him in that rapture, his Master's spirit should be doubled upon him; what an accession of the Spirit of joy and confidence must needs be to thy happy disciples, in seeing thee thus gradually rising up to thy heaven! Oh how unwillingly

did their intente eyes let go so blessed an object ! How unwelcome was that cloud which interposed itself betwixt thee and them : and, closing up itself, left only a glorious splendour behind it, as the bright track of thine ascension ! Of old, here below, the glory of the Lord appeared in the Cloud : now, afar off in the sky, the cloud intercepted this heavenly glory, if distance did not rather do it than that bright meteor. Their eyes attended thee on thy way so far as their beams could reach ; when they could go no further the cloud received thee. Lo, yet even that very screen, whereby thou wert taken off from all earthly view, was no other than glorious. How much rather do all the beholders fix their sight upon that cloud, than upon the best piece of the firmament ! Never was the sun itself gazed on with so much attention. With what long looks, with what astonished acclamations, did these transported beholders follow thee, their ascending Saviour. As if they would have looked through that cloud and that heaven, that hid thee from them.

But oh, what tongue of the highest archangel of heaven can express the welcome of thee, the King of Glory, into those blessed regions of immortality ? Surely, the empyreal heaven never

resounded with so much joy: *God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet*¹. It is not for us weak and finite creatures to wish to conceive those incomprehensible, spiritual, Divine gratulations, that the glorious Trinity gave to the victorious and now glorified human nature. Certainly, if *when he brought his only begotten Son into the world, he said, Let all the angels of God worship him*¹; much more now that He ascends *on high and hath led captivity captive, hath he given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow*². And if the holy angels did so carol at his birth, in the very entrance into that estate of humiliation and infirmity, with what triumph did they receive him now, returning from the perfect achievement of man's redemption!

And why dost not thou, O my soul, help to bear thy part with the happy quire of heaven? Why art not thou rapt out of my bosom with an ecstasy of joy, to see this human nature of ours exalted above all the powers of heaven; adored of Angels, Archangels, Cherubim, Seraphim, and all those mighty and glorious Spirits; and

¹ Ps. xlvii. 5.

¹ See Heb. i. 6.

² See Ps. lxxviii. 18; Phil. ii. 9, 10.

sitting there crowned with infinite glory and majesty?

Although, little would it avail thee that our nature is thus honoured, if the benefit of this Ascension did not reflect on thee. How many are miserable enough in themselves, notwithstanding the glory of their human nature in Christ! None but those that are found in Him, are the happier by Him: who, but the members, are the better for the glory of the head? O Saviour, how should our weakness have ever hoped to climb into heaven, if thou hadst not gone before and made way for us? It is for us, that thou, the Forerunner, art entered in. Now, thy Church hath her wish, *Draw me, we will run after thee*³. Even so, O Blessed Jesu, how ambitiously should we follow thee with the paces of love and faith, and aspire towards thy glory! Thou that art *the way*⁴, hast made the way to thyself and us: *Thou didst humble thyself, and becamest obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*⁵. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted thee; and upon the same terms will not fail to advance us. We see thy track before us of humility and obe-

³ Cant. i. 4.⁴ John xiv. 6.⁵ See Phil. ii. 8, 9.

dience. Oh teach me to follow thee, in the roughest ways of obedience, in the bloody paths of death; that I may at last overtake thee, in those high steps of Immortality.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 34.*

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.—St. Mark xvi. 19. (*Gospel.*)

O JESU, thou art our head, we are thy body; how can the body but participate of the glory of the head? As for thyself, therefore, so for us, art thou possessed of that heavenly glory: as thou sufferedst for us, so for us thou also reignest. Let every knee therefore bow unto thee *of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth*⁶. O blessed be thy name for ever and ever! *Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all*⁷.

And now, O Saviour, what a superabundant amends is made to thy glorified humanity for all thy bitter sufferings upon earth! Thine agony

⁶ Phil. ii. 10.

⁷ 1 Chron. xxix. 11.

was extreme, but thy glory is infinite ; thy cross was heavy, but thy crown transcendently glorious ; thy pains were inconceivably grievous, but short ; thy glory everlasting : if thou wert scorned by men, thou art now adored by angels : thou, that stoodest before the judgment-seat of a Pilate, shalt come, in all heavenly magnificence, to judge both the quick and the dead : shortly, thou which wouldest stoop to be a servant upon earth, rulest and reignest for ever in heaven as the king of eternal glory.

O then, my soul, seeing thy Saviour is *received up into this infinite glory*^s, with what attention and fervour of spirit shouldest thou fix thine eyes upon that heaven where He lives and reigns ! How canst thou be but wholly taken up, with the sight and thought of that place of blessedness ? How canst thou abide to grovel any longer on this base earth, where is nothing but vanity and vexation ; and refrain to mind the things above, where is all felicity and glory ? With what longings and holy ambition shouldest thou desire to aspire to that place of eternal rest and beatitude, into which thy Saviour is ascended ; and with Him to partake of that glory and happiness, which

^s 1 Tim. iii. 16.

He hath provided for all that love Him? O Saviour, it is this clog of wretched infidelity and earthliness, that hangs heavy upon my soul; and keeps me from mounting up into thy presence, and from a comfortable fruition of thee. Oh do thou take off this sinful weight from me, and raise up my affections and conversation unto thee: enable me constantly to enjoy thee, by a lively faith, here; till, by thy mercy, I shall be received into glory.—*The Great Mystery of Godliness*, § 14.

Sunday after Ascension Day.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.—1 St. Peter iv. 10. (*Epistle*.)

O BLESSED God, what variety of gifts hast thou scattered amongst the sons of men! To one, thou hast given vigour of body; to another, agility; beauty, to a third: to one, depth of judgment; to another, quickness of apprehension: to one, readiness and rarity of invention; to another,

tenacity of memory : to one, the knowledge of liberal arts ; to another, the exquisiteness of manual skill : to one, worldly wealth ; to another, honour : to one, a wise heart ; to another, an eloquent tongue : to one, more than enough ; to another, contentment with a little : to one, valour ; to another, sagacity. These favours, O Lord, thou hast promiscuously dispersed, amongst both thy friends and enemies : but oh, how transcendent are those spiritual mercies, which thou hast reserved for thine own ; the graces of heavenly wisdom, lively faith, fervent charity, firm hope, joy in the Holy Ghost, and all the rest of that divine bevy ! For any competency of the least of thy common blessings I desire to be thankful to thy bounty ; for, which of them, O God, can I either merit or requite ? But, oh for a soul truly and eagerly ambitious of those thy best mercies ! Oh, let me ever long for them, and ever be insatiable of them. Oh do thou fill my heart with the desire of them, and let that desire never find itself filled.—*The Breathings of the Devout Soul*, xxviii.

They shall put you out of the synagogues : yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do

unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.—St. John xvi. 2, 3. (*Gospel.*)

GATHER as much as you can of sound knowledge. Cultivate your minds, as far as the opportunities of your vocation in the world allow, by an extensive examination of the mysteries of religion ; and, instead of resting content, like babes, with nothing else but milk, endeavour thoroughly to digest the solid meat provided for your souls.

Yet, always recollect to distinguish accurately between matters of faith and matters of opinion ; between those things which are of the very essence of the Christian religion, and those things which are often added, over and above, as unnecessary appendages ; between those things which belong to the body and soul of Christianity, and those which pertain only to its dress and decoration. And recollect again, that, whatever be the subject of argument or inquiry, your faith must ever be restrained within bounds ; after the custom of a prudent householder, who listens, perhaps, to the affairs of his neighbours, but pays attention only to his own.

Neither, on secondary points like these, assume the right of prescribing, with magisterial authority, to the judgments of others, or affixing a mark of ignominy and reproach upon those who venture

to think otherwise ; but all who agree with you in the same common faith, while they depart not, by any habit of sin, from the right rule of conduct, embrace as dear brethren.—*Peace on Earth,* § 7.

Whit Sunday.

When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.—Acts ii. 1, 2. (*Epistle.*)

IN all that we have to do with God, He justly requires and expects from us an awful [i. e. reverent] disposition of heart towards his infiniteness. Hereupon it was that He delivered his law in thunder, fire, smoke, and all dreadful magnificence ; and when, upon the same day, He would send down his Spirit for the propagation of the Gospel, it was done with an astonishing Majesty ; with a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind ; and with the apparition of cloven and fiery

tongues. And, as it was thus in the descent of the Holy Ghost in the miraculous gifts, so it is in the sanctifying graces; seldom ever doth God by them seize upon the heart but with a vehement concussion going before. That of St. Paul's conversion was extraordinary and miraculous; but in some degree it is thus in every soul; we are struck down first, and are made sensible of our spiritual blindness, ere our full call be accomplished. As it was with Elijah in the mount of Horeb, there came first a strong wind, that tore the rocks and mountains; and, after that, an earthquake; then, a fire; before the still small voice: so it is usually in our breasts; ere the comfortable voice of God's Spirit speak to our hearts, there must be some blusterings and flashes of the Law. It is our honour and his favour, that we are allowed to love God: it is our duty to fear Him. We may be too familiar in our love; we cannot be too awful [reverent] in our fear.—*Select Thoughts*, xvi.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.—
St. John xiv. 18. (*Gospel.*)

THERE is nothing more troublesome in human society than the disappointment of trust and fail-

ing of friends : for, besides the disorder that it works in our own affairs, it commonly is attended with a necessary deficiency of our performances to others. The leaning upon a broken reed gives us both a fall and a wound. Such is a false friend, who, after professions of love and real offices, either slinks from us, or betrays us. This is that which the great pattern of patience so bitterly complains of, as none of his least afflictions ; *My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me*¹. It went to the heart of David that his own familiar friend, in whom he trusted, which did eat of his bread, should lift up his heel against him¹. And, surely, those that are staunch and faithful in themselves cannot but be so much the more deeply affected with the perfidious dealing of others ; and yet also so much the more, as their confidence and entireness was greater : this was that which heightened the vexation of that man, who is so famous for the integrity of his heart : *It was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company*². And still our daily expe-

¹ Job xix. 14.

¹ See Ps. xli. 9.

² Ps. lv. 13, 14.

rience gives us miserable instances in this kind. He hath had little to do in the world that hath not spent many a sigh upon others' faithlessness. And now, O my soul, the more sad proof thou hast had of the untrusty disposition and carriage of men, the more it concerns thee to betake thyself, in all zealous and absolute affiance, unto the sure protection and never failing providence of thy God; the God, who, being Truth itself, never did, never can forfeit his trust to any soul that relied upon his most certain promises, upon his promised mercies, upon his merciful and just performances. *My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God³.* It shall not trouble thee to find men false, while thou hast such a true God to have recourse to.—*Soliloquies*, xlv.

³ Ps. lxii. 5—7.

Monday in Whitsun Week.

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.—Acts x. 34, 35. (*Epistle.*)

WE have not to do with a God that stands upon curiosities of belief; or that, upon pain of damnation, requires of every believer an exquisite perfection of judgment concerning every capillary vein of theological truth: it is enough for Him, if we be right for the main substance of the body. He doth not call rigorously for every stone in the battlements; it sufficeth, for the capacity of our salvation, if the foundation be held entire.

It is a slander therefore, that we confine truth and blessedness to a corner of Reformed Christians: no; we seek and find it every where, where God hath a Church; and God's Church we know to be universal. Let them be Abasines, Cophtics, Armenians, Georgians, Jacobites, or whatever names either slander or distinction hath put upon them, if they hold the foundation

firm, howsoever disgracefully built upon with wood, hay, stubble⁴, we hold them Christ's, we hold them ours. Hence it is that the New Jerusalem is, for her beauty and uniformity, set forth with twelve precious gates⁵; though for use and substance, one: for that, from all coasts of heaven, there is free access to the Church of Christ; and, in Him, to life and glory.

He who is *the Truth and the Life*⁶ hath said, *This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*⁷. This knowledge, which is our way to life, is not alike attained of all; some have greater light and deeper insight into it than others. That mercy which accepts of the least degree of the true apprehension of Christ, hath not promised to dispense with the wilful neglect of those, who might know Him more clearly, more exactly. Let those careless souls, therefore, which stand indifferent betwixt life and death, content themselves with good meanings and generalities of belief; but, for me, I shall labour to furnish myself with all requisite truths; and, above all, shall aspire towards *the excellency of the know-*

⁴ 1 Cor. iii. 12.

⁶ John xiv. 6.

⁵ See Rev. xxi. 12.

⁷ John xvii. 3.

ledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings^a.—Satan's Fiery Darts Quenched, Decade i.

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.—St. John iii. 16, 17. (*Gospel.*)

LORD! what a transcendent, what an infinite, love is this! what an object was this for thee to love! A world of sinners! Impotent, wretched creatures that had despised thee; that had no motive for thy favour but deformity, misery, professed enmity! It had been mercy enough in thee, that thou didst not condemn the world; but, that thou shouldest love it, is more than mercy. It was thy great goodness to forbear the acts of just vengeance to the sinful world of man; but, to give unto it tokens of thy love, is a favour beyond all expression. The least gift from thee had been more than the world could hope for; but that thou shouldest not stick to give thine only

^a Phil. iii. 8. 10.

begotten Son, the Son of thy love, the Son of thine essence, thy co-equal, co-eternal Son, who was more than ten thousand worlds, to redeem this one forlorn world of sinners, is love above all comprehension of men and angels. What diminution had it been to thee and thine essential glory, O thou great God of heaven, that the souls that sinned should have died and perished everlastingly? Yet, so infinite was thy loving mercy, that thou wouldest rather give thine only son out of thy bosom, than that there should not be a redemption for believers.—*The Devout Soul, Chap. iv. § 1.*

Tuesday in Whitsun Week.

When the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.—Acts viii. 14, 15. (*Epistle.*)

WHAT a wretched narrowness of heart is this which I find in myself; that, when I may have

all things, I take up with nothing; and, when I may be possessed of an infinite good, I please myself in grasping a little thick clay! It was a large word that the Apostle said to his Corinthians: *Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours*⁹. What, shall we think they were richer than their neighbours? or is not this the condition of all those of whom he can say in the next words, *ye are Christ's*⁹? There, there comes in all our right to this infinite wealth: of ourselves, we are beggars; in Him, who is Lord of all, we are feoffed in¹ all things: for while he saith, *All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's*⁹, he doth in effect say, "Christ is yours; and, in Him, God is yours;" for this right is mutual. How else should all things be ours, if God were not ours, without whom all is nothing? And how should God the Father be ours, without that Son of his love, who hath said, *All things that the Father hath are mine*². *Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee*³. *No man cometh unto the Father, but by me*⁴. If then, Christ be mine, all is mine; and

⁹ 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

¹ *Feoffed in*, made possessors of.

² John xvi. 15.

³ John xvii. 21.

⁴ John xiv. 6.

if I have so oft received Him, and so oft renewed my union with Him, how is He but mine? O Saviour, let me feel myself thoroughly possess of thee; whether the world slide or sink, I am happy.—*Select Thoughts*, lvi.

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.—St. John x. 10. (*Gospel*.)

THOU didst not, O Saviour, when thou sawest mankind utterly lost and forlorn, content thyself to send down one of thy Cherubim or Seraphim, or some other of thy heavenly angels, to undertake the great work of our deliverance; as well knowing that task too high for any created power; but wouldest, out of thine infinite love and compassion, vouchsafe, so to abase thy blessed self, as to descend from the throne of thy celestial glory to this dungeon of earth; and, not leaving what thou hadst and what thou wast, to assume what thou hadst not—man; and to disparage thyself by being one of us, that we might become like unto thee, co-heirs of thy glory and blessedness. Thou, that art the eternal Son of God, wouldest condescend so low as to be man; that we, who are worms and no men, might be advanced to be the sons of God; thou wouldest be a ser-

vant, that we might reign ; thou wouldest expose thyself to the shame and disgrace of thy vile creatures here, that thou mightest raise us up to the height of heavenly honour, with thee our God and thy holy angels ; thou wouldest die for a while that we might live eternally.—*The Soul's Farewell to Earth*, § 6.

Trinity Sunday.

They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.
—Rev. iv. 8. (*Epistle*.)

BE thou, O my soul, ever swallowed up in the consideration of that infinite, self-being, Essence whom all created spirits are not capable sufficiently to admire. Behold, and never cease wondering at, the majesty of his glory. The bodily eyes dazzle at the sight of the sun ; but, if there were as many suns as there are stars in the firmament of heaven, their united splendour were but darkness to their all-glorious Creator. Thou canst not yet hope to see Him as He is ; but, lo !

thou beholdest where He dwells, in light inaccessible ; the sight of whose very outward verge is enough to put thee into a perpetual ecstasy. It is not for thee, as yet, to strive to enter within the vail ; thine eyes may not be free, where the angels hide their faces. What thou wantest in sight, O my soul, supply in wonder. Never any mortal man, O God, durst sue to see thy face, save that one entire servant of thine, whose face thy conference had made shining and radiant ; but even he, though inured to thy presence, was not capable to behold such glory, and live. Far be it from me, O Lord, to presume so high. Only let me see thee as thou hast bidden me ; and but so as not to behold thee, after thy gracious revelation, were my sin. Let me see, even in this distance, some glimmering of thy divine Power, Wisdom, Justice, Mercy, Truth, Providence ; and let me bless and adore thee, in what I see.—
The Soul's Farewell to Earth, § 2.

WHAT a high favour is it, in the great God of heaven, that He is pleased to stoop so low, as to allow wretched man, here upon earth, to be acquainted with so infinite a majesty ! yet, in the multitude of his mercies, this hath He con-

descended unto. So far hath He yielded to us, as that He is pleased we should know Him ; and, to that end, He hath clearly revealed Himself to mankind : and, more than so, He is willing and content that we should enjoy Him, and should continually make a comfortable use of his presence with us ; that we should walk with Him, and impart all our secret thoughts and counsels to Him ; that we should call for his gracious aid upon all our occasions ; that we should impart all our wants, and fears, and doubts to Him, with expectation of a merciful and sure answer, and supply from heaven : yea, that He should invite us, silly wretches, to his presence ; and call us up to the throne of grace ; and encourage us poor souls, dejected with the conscience of our unworthiness, to put up our suits boldly to his merciful hands : yea, that He should give this honour to dust and ashes, as to style us his friends. How shamefully unthankful, and how justly miserable shall I be, if I make not an answerable use of so infinite a mercy ! O God, how utterly unworthy shall I be of this grace, if, notwithstanding these merciful proffers and solicitations, I shall continue a willing stranger from thee ; and shall make no more improvement of these favours, than if they had never been rendered ! Oh, let me know

thee ; let me acknowledge thee ; let me adore thee ; let me love thee ; let me walk with thee ; let me enjoy thee ; let me, in a holy and awful familiarity, be better and more entirely acquainted with thee, than with the world, than with myself : so I shall be sure to be happy, here ; and, hereafter, glorious.—*Soliloquies*, xxxii.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit.—St. John iii. 8. (*Gospel*.)

WHEN, therefore, the gracious aspirations of the Holy Ghost are within thee, be thankful to the infinite munificence of that Blessed Spirit ; and still pray, *Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south ; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out*⁵. But, when thou shalt find thy soul becalmed, and not a leaf stirring in this garden of thine, be not too much dejected with an ungrounded opinion of being destitute of thy God. Neither do thou repine at the seasons or measures of his bounty : that most free and infinitely-beneficent agent will not be tied to our terms ; but will give what, and how, and when He

⁵ Cant. iv. 16.

pleaseth. Only do thou humbly wait upon his goodness, and be *confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*⁶.—*The Balm of Gilead*, § 9.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.
—St. John iii. 14, 15. (*Gospel*.)

IN this troublesome desert we are all stung by that fiery and old serpent; O Saviour, it is to thee we must look, and be cured; it is thou that wert their Paschal Lamb, their Manna, their Rock, their Serpent. To all purposes dost thou vary thyself to thy Church, that we may find thee every where: thou art for our nourishment, refreshing, cure; as hereafter, so even now, all in all.—*Contemplations upon the Old Testament*, Book vii. Con. 2.

CANST thou, in a sense of thine own misery, close with thy Saviour? canst thou throw thyself into the arms of his mercy? canst thou trust Him

⁶ Phil. i. 6.

with thy soul, and repose thyself upon Him for forgiveness and salvation? canst thou lay thyself before Him, as a miserable object of his grace and mercy? and, when it is held forth to thee, canst thou lay some, though weak, hold upon it? Labour what thou mayest for further degrees of strength daily: set not up thy rest in this pitch of grace: but cheer up thyself, my son; even thus much faith shall save thy soul. Thou believest; and He hath said it, that is truth itself: *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life*⁷.
—*The Balm of Gilead*, § 7.

The First Sunday after Trinity.

We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.—1 St. John iv. 16. (*Epistle*.)

OUR affections are then only safe and right, when they are deduced from God, and have their rise from heaven. Then only can I take com-

⁷ John iii. 36.

fort of my love, when I can love my wife, my child, my friends, myself, my pleasures, and whatsoever contentments, in God. Thus I may be sure not to offend, either in the object, or measure. No man can, in God, love whom he should not; nor immoderately love whom he should: this holy respect doth both direct and limit him, and shuts up his delights in the conscience of a lawful fruition. The like must be said of our joy, and fear, and grief, and whatever other affection: for we cannot derive our joy from God, if we place it upon any sinful thing, or if we exceed in the measure of things allowed; we cannot fetch our fear from heaven, if it be cowardly and desperate; nor our grief, if it be merely worldly and heartless. And, if our affections do begin from above, they will surely end there; closing up in that God who is the author and orderer of them. And, such as our affections are, such will be the whole disposition of the soul, and the whole carriage of our actions: these are the feet of the soul; and which way the feet walk, the whole man goes. Happy is the man, that can be so far the master of himself, as to entertain no affections but such as he takes upon the rebound from heaven.—*Select Thoughts*, ii.

The rich man also died, and was buried ; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.—St. Luke xvi. 22, 23. (*Gospel.*)

No sooner is this living spirit of ours dislodged from the body, than it is presented, as in a privy sessions, to her Judge; from whom she receives a speedy doom of life or death. The sentence is instantly seconded with an answerable execution. The good angels are glad actors in the happy instalment of the just in their glory: the evil angels seize upon the guilty soul, and drag it to their hell. For any third place or condition, let them take thought that believe it; for me, I must profess I never saw any colour of ground for it in the sacred oracles of God; and shall not easily believe, that a truth, mainly importing us, would have been concealed from our eyes.

Woe is me, what a doleful, what a dreadful spectacle is this, which is now presented to my soul! the burning Tophet; the bottomless pit; the lake of fire and brimstone; the region of horror and death, wherein there is the perfection of all more than conceivable anguish; the full consummation of the divine vengeance to sinners; exquisiteness, eternity of torment; despair and

impossibility of release or intermission ; perpetual dying, perpetual living in a death that never can end. How are my thoughts at a loss in this place of confusion ! Whether shall I more tremble, O God, at the consideration of thy terrible justice, or be swallowed up with astonishment of these infinite and intolerable sufferings ? I should not know thee, if I did not, with holy Chrysostom, believe, that the utter loss of thy presence alone is a thousand hells : to be for ever banished from thy sight, in which is the fulness of joy, what can it be less, than fulness of torment ? But, alas, this is far from a mere absence !

The very sin of the lost is no small part of their hell ; for, as all their powers, parts, faculties, are as so many subjects of their insupportable pain and torture, so, out of that insufferable extremity, they conceive a desperate indignation and hatred against God : not as He is in Himself, infinitely good, for goodness can be no object of hate ; but as He is to them, a severe, though most just avenger of sin ; to which is ever added a will obstinately fixed in evil : while they were in their way, they were in a possibility of reclamation ; now that they are *in termino*, they can be no other than they are. As, therefore, the glorified souls are in a condition like to the

angels of heaven, so the lost are in the state of devils; not more capable of avoiding torment, than sin; equally *reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day*⁷: when, woe is me! that which seemed little less than infinite shall yet receive a further aggravation of pain and misery; when the addition of the body shall give a further extent to this woeful cruciation⁸ without all possibility of release for ever.—*The Invisible World*, Book iii. § 10.

The Second Sunday after Trinity.

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.—1 St. John iii. 18. (*Epistle.*)

ONE said, "It is good to inure the mouth to speak well; for good speech is many times drawn into the affection:" but I would fear that speaking well, without feeling, were the next way

⁷ Jude 6.

⁸ *Cruciation*, torment.

to procure habitual hypocrisy. Let my good words follow good affections ; not go before them. I will therefore speak as I think : but, withal, I will labour to think well ; and then, I know I cannot but speak well.—*Meditations and Vows*, Cent. i. 66.

If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, than have we confidence toward God.—1 St. John iii. 20, 21. (*Epistle*.)

It is a true word of the Apostle, *God is greater than our heart*^o ; and, surely, none but He : under that great God, the supreme power on earth is the conscience. Every man is a little world within himself ; and, in this little world, there is a court of judicature erected, wherein, next under God, the conscience sits as the supreme judge, from whom there is no appeal ; that passeth sentence upon us, upon all our actions, upon all our intentions : for our persons, absolving one, condemning another ; for our actions, allowing one, forbidding another. If that condemn us, in vain shall all the world beside acquit us ; and, if that clear us, the doom which

^o 1 John iii. 20.

the world passeth upon us is frivolous and ineffectual. I grant this judge is sometimes corrupted, with the bribes of hope, with the weak fears of loss, with an undue respect of persons, with powerful importunities, with false witnesses, with forged evidences, to pass a wrong sentence upon the person or cause; for which he shall be answerable to Him that is higher than the highest; but yet this doom, though reversible by the tribunal of heaven, is still obligatory on earth: so as it is my fault that my conscience is misled, but it is not my fault to follow my conscience. How much need have I therefore, O my God, to pray, that thou wouldest guide my conscience aright, and keep this great judge in my bosom from corruption and error! and what need hath this intestine arbiter of mine to take special care, that he may avoid all misinformations that may mislead his judgment; and all the base suggestions of outward advantage or loss, that may deprave his affections! And, O thou, that only art greater than my conscience, keep me from doing ought against my conscience: I cannot disobey that but I must offend thee; since that is but thine officer under thee, and only commands for thee.—*Soliloquies*, li.

A certain man made a great supper, and bade many : and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come ; for all things are now ready.— St. Luke xiv. 16, 17. (*Gospel.*)

BLESSED are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb¹⁰. Feasts have more than necessity of provision, more than ordinary diet ; marriage-feasts have yet more than common abundance ; but the marriage-feast of the Son of God to his blessed Spouse the Church, must so far exceed in all heavenly munificence and variety, as the persons are of the greater state and majesty ; there is new wine, pure manna, and all manner of spiritual dainties ; and with the continual cheer, a sweet and answerable welcome, while the Bridegroom lovingly cheereth us up, *Eat, O friends ; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved*¹¹ : yea, there shalt thou be my soul, not a guest, but, how unworthy soever, the Bride herself, whom He hath everlastingly espoused to Himself in truth and righteousness. The contract is passed here below : the marriage is consummate above, and solemnized with a perpetual feast ; so that now thou mayest safely say, *My beloved is*

¹⁰ Rev. xix. 9.

¹¹ Cant. v. 1.

*mine and I am his*¹: wherefore hearken, O my soul and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house, thy supposed home of this world; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him².—*The Art of Divine Meditation*, Chap. xxv.

The Third Sunday after Trinity.

Be clothed with humility.—1 St. Peter v. 5. (*Epistle*.)

THE humble man is a friendly enemy to himself: for, though he be not out of his own favour, no man sets so low a value of his worth, as himself; not out of ignorance or carelessness, but of a voluntary and meek dejectedness. He admires every thing in another, while the same or better in himself he thinks not unworthily contemned: his eyes are full of his own wants, and others' perfections. He loves rather to give than take

¹ Cant. ii. 16.

² Ps. xlv. 10, 11.

honour; not in a fashion of complimentary courtesy, but in simplicity of his judgment; neither doth he fret at those on whom he forceth precedency, as one that hoped their modesty would have refused; but holds his mind unfeignedly below his place, and is ready to go lower, if need be, without discontentment. When he hath but his due, he magnifieth courtesy, and disclaims his deserts. He can be more ashamed of honour than grieved with contempt; because he thinks that causeless, this deserved. His face, his carriage, his habits, savour of lowliness without affectation; and yet he is much under that he seemeth. His words are few and soft; never either peremptory or censorious; because he thinks both each man more wise, and none more faulty than himself: and, when he approacheth to the throne of God, he is so taken up with the divine greatness, that in his own eyes he is either vile or nothing. Places of public charge are fain to sue to him, and hale him out of his chosen obscurity: which he holds off; not cunningly to cause importunity, but sincerely in the conscience of his defects. He frequenteth not the stages of common resorts; and then alone thinks himself in his natural element, when he is shrouded within his own walls. He is ever jealous over himself; and still suspecteth

that which others applaud. There is no better object of beneficence ; for, what he receives, he ascribes merely to the bounty of the giver ; nothing to merit. He emulates no man in any thing but goodness ; and that, with more desire, than hope, to overtake. No man is so contented with his little, and so patient under miseries ; because he knows the greatest evils are below his sins, and the least favours above his deservings. He walks ever in awe, and dare not but subject every word and action to a high and just censure. He is a lowly valley, sweetly planted and well watered : the proud man's earth, whereon he trampleth ; but secretly full of wealthy mines, more worth than he that walks over them : a rich stone, set in lead : and, lastly, a true Temple of God, built with a low roof.—*Characters of Virtues.*

There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.—St. Luke xv. 10. (*Gospel.*)

THOU hast told us, O Saviour, that there is joy in the presence of thine angels for a sinner's repentance. Those blessed spirits are so far from envying our happiness, that, as they endeavour it here, so they congratulate it in heaven : and we well know that these good spirits do not more

rejoice in the conversion of a sinner, than the evil spirits do in the miscarriage of a convert. The course of the holy obedience of thy servants here is doubtless a pleasing object to thine angels; neither are those malignant spirits less pleased with the wicked practices of their vassals; but the joy arises to both, from the contrary condition of those parties over which they have prevailed. The allegiance of a good subject, though well accepted, yet is no news to a gracious Sovereign; but the coming in of some great rebel is happy tidings at the court: on the contrary, where there is a rivalry of sovereignty, for a professed enemy to do hostile actions is no other than could be expected; but for a subject or a domestic servant to be drawn into the conspiracy, is not more advantage than joy to the intruder. O God, thou hast mercifully called me out of the world to a profession of thy name: I know what eyes those envious spirits have ever upon me: O, do thou *lead me in thy righteousness because of mine enemies*³. If thine angels have found cause to joy in my conversion, oh, do thou keep me from making music in hell by my miscarriage.—*Soliloquies*, lxx.

³ Ps. v. 8.

The Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.—Rom. viii. 23. (*Epistle.*)

How oft have I seen the heaven overcast with clouds and tempest, no sun appearing to comfort me ! Yet even those gloomy and stormy seasons have I ridden out patiently, only with the help of the common light of the day ; and at last the sunbeams have broken forth happily, and cheered my soul. It is well for my ordinary state, if, through the mists of mine own dulness and Satan's temptations, I can descry some glimpse of heavenly comfort : let me never hope, while I am in this vale, to see the clear face of that sun, without a shower. Such happiness is reserved for above. That upper region of glory is free from these doubtful and miserable vicissitudes. There, O God, we shall see as we are seen. *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart*⁴.—*Occasional Meditations*, xvi.

⁴ Ps. xcvi. 11.

Can the blind lead the blind ? shall they not both fall into the ditch ?—St. Luke vi. 39. (*Gospel.*)

THE blind man hath legs ; the lame man hath eyes : the lame man lends his eyes to the blind ; the blind man lends his legs to the lame ; and now both of them move, where otherwise both must sit still and perish. It is hard to say, whether is more beholden to other : the one gives strength, the other direction ; both of them equally necessary to motion.

Though it be not in other cases so sensible, yet surely this very traffic of faculties is that whereby we live ; neither could the world subsist without it : one man lends a brain ; another, an arm : one, a tongue ; another, a hand. He, that knows wherefore He made all, hath taken order to improve every part to the benefit of the whole. What do I wish ought that is not useful ? And if there be any thing in me, that may serve to the good of others, it is not mine, but the Church's. I cannot live but by others : it were injurious, if others should not likewise share with me.—*Occasional Meditations*, cxxv.

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.—1 St. Peter iii. 14, 15. (*Epistle.*)

THE wicked man is a very coward, and is afraid of every thing : of God, because He is his enemy : of Satan, because he is his tormentor : of God's creatures, because they, joining with their Maker, fight against him : of himself, because he bears, about him, his own accuser and executioner. The godly man, contrarily, is afraid of nothing ; not of God, because he knows Him his best friend, and therefore will not hurt him : not of Satan, because he cannot hurt him : not of afflictions, because he knows they proceed from a loving God, and end to his own good : not of the creatures, since the very stones of the field are in league with him : not of himself, since his conscience is at peace. A wicked man may be secure, because he knows not what he hath to fear ; or desperate, through extremity of fear : but truly courageous he cannot be. Faithlessness cannot choose but be false-hearted. I will ever,

by my courage, take trial of my faith: by how much more I fear, by so much less I believe.—
Meditations and Vows, Cent. ii. 74.

It came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genesaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.—St. Luke v. 1, 2. (*Gospel.*)

As the sun at his first rising draws all eyes to it, so did this Sun of Righteousness, when He first shone forth into the world. His miraculous cures drew patients; his divine doctrine drew auditors; both together drew the admiring multitude, by troops, after Him. And why do we not still follow thee, O Saviour, through deserts and mountains, over land and seas, that we may be both healed and taught? It was thy word that when thou wert lift up, thou wouldst draw all men unto thee⁵: behold thou art lift up long since, both to the tree of shame, and to the throne of heavenly glory. *Draw me, we will run after thee*⁶. Thy word is still the same, though proclaimed by men; thy virtue is still the same, though exercised upon

⁵ See John xii. 32.

⁶ Cant. i. 4.

the spirits of men. Oh give us to hunger after both, that by both our souls may be satisfied.

If we have thus vainly misspent the time of our darkness, let us, at the command of Christ, cast out our new washen nets; our humble and penitent obedience shall come home laden with blessings. *And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.* What a difference there is betwixt our own voluntary acts and those that are done upon command; not more in the grounds of them, than in the issue! Those are oftentimes fruitless; these, ever successful. Never man threw out his net at the word of his Saviour and drew it back empty. Who would not obey thee, O Christ, since thou dost so bountifully requite our weakest services?

It was not mere retribution that was intended in this event, but instruction also. This act was not without a mystery. He that should be made a fisher of men shall in this draught foresee his success. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore*⁷. The very first draught, that Peter made,

⁷ Mat. xiii. 47, 48.

after the complement of his apostleship, enclosed no less than three thousand souls. O powerful Gospel, that can fetch sinful men from out of the depths of natural corruption! O happy souls, that, from the blind and muddy cells of our wicked nature, are drawn forth to the glorious liberty of the sons of God!

O Simon, thy Saviour is come into thine own ship to call thee, to call others by thee unto blessedness; and dost thou say, *Depart from me, O Lord?* As if the patient should say to the physician, "Depart from me, for I am sick." It was the voice of astonishment, not of dislike; the voice of humility, not of discontentment: yea, because thou art a sinful man, therefore hath thy Saviour need to come to thee, to stay with thee; and because thou art humble in the acknowledgment of thy sinfulness, therefore Christ delights to abide with thee, and will call thee to abide with Him. No man ever fared the worse, for abasing himself to his God. Christ hath left many a soul for froward and unkind usage; never any for the disparagement of itself, and entreaties of humility.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book ii. Con. 4.*

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

Alive unto God.—Rom. vi. 11. (*Epistle.*)

LIFE, where it is, is discerned by Breathing, Sense, Motion.

Where there is the breath of life, there must be a life that sends it forth. If, then, the soul breathes forth holy desires, doubtless there is a life whence they proceed. Now deny, if thou canst, that thou hast these spiritual breathings of holy desires within thee. Dost thou not many a time sigh for thine own insensateness? Is not thy heart troubled with the thoughts of thy want of grace? Dost thou not truly desire, that God would *renew a right spirit within thee*^a? Take comfort to thyself: this is the work of the inward principle of God's Spirit within thee. As well may a man breathe without life, as thou couldst be thus affected without grace.

Sense is a quick descrier of life: pinch or wound a dead man, he feels nothing; but the living perceiveth the easiest touch. When thou

^a Ps. li. 10.

hast heard the fearful judgments of God denounced against sinners, and laid home to the conscience, hast thou not found thy heart pierced with them? hast thou not shrunk inward; and secretly thought, "How shall I escape this dreadful condemnation?" When thou hast heard the sweet mercies of God laid forth to penitent sinners, hath not thy heart silently said, "Oh, that I had my share in them?" When thou hast heard the name of Christ blasphemed, hast thou not felt a secret horror in thy bosom? All these argue a true spiritual life within thee.

Motion is the most perfect discoverer of life. He that can stir his limbs, is surely not dead. The feet of the soul are the affections. Hast thou not found in thyself a hate and detestation of that sin, whereinto thou hast been miscarried? Hast thou not found in thyself a true grief of heart for thy wretched indisposition to all good things? Hast thou not found a secret love to and complacency in those whom thou hast thought truly godly and conscionable? Without a true life of grace these things could never have been. Are not thine eyes and hands many times lifted up, in an imploration of mercy? Canst thou deny that thou hast a true, though but weak, appetite to the means, and further degrees of grace? What can

this be, but that *hunger and thirst after righteousness*⁹, to which our Saviour hath pronounced blessedness?—*The Balm of Gilead*, § 10.

Jesus said unto his disciples, Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.—St. Matthew v. 20. (*Gospel*.)

GIVE me leave, yea let me take it, to complain that we are fallen into a cold and hollow age, wherein the religion of many is but fashion, and their piety gilded superstition. Men care only to seem Christians. If they can get God's livery on their backs, and his name in their mouths, they outface all reproofs. How many are there who, if they can keep their church, give an alms, bow their knee, say their prayers, pay their tithes, and once a year receive the Sacrament (it matters not how corrupt hearts, how filthy tongues, how false hands they bear), can say in their hearts, with Esau, *I have enough, my brother*¹. As if God cared for this thy vain formality; as if He hated thee not so much more than a pagan, by how much thou wouldest seem more good. Be not deceived; if long devotions, sad looks, hard

⁹ Mat. v. 6.

¹ Gen. xxxiii. 9.

penances, bountiful alms would have carried it, without the solid substance of godliness, these Scribes and Pharisees had never been shut out of heaven. Consider this therefore, dear brethren; none but your own eyes can look into your hearts: we see your faces; the world sees your lives; yourselves see your souls: if your lives be not holy, your hearts sound,—though your faces were like angels, you shall have your portion with devils. Tell not me thou hearest, prayest, talkest, believest: how livest thou? what doest thou? *Shew me thy faith by thy works*, saith St. James ². It was an excellent answer, that good Moses gave to Lucius in the Church story ³; “the faith that is seen is better than the faith that is heard;” and that of Luther not inferior, That faith *pinguescit operibus*; “grows fat and well liking with good works.” It is a lean starved carcase of faith thou pretendest, without these. If profession be all, the Scribes and Pharisees are before thee. Ransack thy heart; and find sound affection to God, firm resolutions to goodness, true hatred of sin: ransack thy life; and find the truth of works, the life of obedience: then, alone, thy righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and

² See Chap. ii. 18.

³ Socrates, Eccl. Hist.

Pharisees, and thou shalt enter into heaven.—
Sermon i.

The Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.—Rom. vi. 22. (*Epistle.*)

EVEN the natural Son of God was so in the form of a servant that He served indeed : and so did He serve that He endured all sorrow and fulfilled all righteousness. So every Christian is a son and heir to the king of heaven ; and his word must be " I serve."

We all know what service means. For we all are, or were, I imagine, either servants of masters, or servants of the public, or masters of servants, or all these. We cannot therefore be ignorant either what we require of ours or what our superiors require of us. If service consisted only in wearing of liveries, in taking of wages, in making of courtesies, and kissing of hands, there were nothing more easy or more common. All

of us wear the cognizance of our Christianity in our Baptism ; all live upon God's trencher in our maintenance ; all give Him the compliments of a fashionable profession. But, be not deceived : the life of service is work : the work of a Christian is obedience to the law of God. The Centurion, when he would describe his good servant in the Gospel, needed to say no more than this, *I say to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it*⁴. Service then briefly is nothing but a readiness to do as we are bidden ; and therefore both Solomon and He that was greater than Solomon describe it *by keeping the commandments* ; and the chosen vessel gives an everlasting rule ; *his servants ye are to whom ye obey*⁵.—*Sermon vi.*

The wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Rom. vi. 23. (*Epistle.*)

THE wages of sin is death : and what death ? not the death of the body, in the severing of the soul ; but the death of the soul, in separation from God. There is not so much difference betwixt life and death, as there is betwixt the first death and the second. O woeful wages of a desperate

⁴ Mat. viii. 9.

⁵ Rom. vi. 16.

work! Well were these men, if they might go unpaid, and serve for nothing; but, as the mercy of God will not let any of our poor services to Him go unrewarded, so will not his justice suffer the contrary service to go unpaid; *In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*⁶. Beloved, as that worthy Ambrose said on his death-bed, "we are happy in this, that we serve a good master;" how happy shall it be for us, if we shall do Him good service, that, in the day of our account, we may hear, *Euge, serve bone, Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*⁷.—Sermon vi.

So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets.—St. Mark viii. 8. (*Gospel*.)

WHAT a large and open hand hath our God! How infinitely doth his bounty transcend, not the practice only, but the admiration of man! We think it well if, upon often asking, we can receive small favours; if, after long delay, we can be gratified with a condescent; and, if we have received one courtesy, that is a bar to a

⁶ 2 Thess. i. 8.

⁷ Mat. xxv. 23.

second : whereas, our munificent God gives us, not only what we ask, but what we ask not ; and, therefore, before we ask. Yea, it is He that gives us to ask ; neither could we so much as crave good things, if He did not put into us those holy desires. Yea, He not only gives us blessings, before we ask ; but He gives us the best things, a right to eternal glory, before we are at all ; yea, before the world was. And, as He prevents us in time, so He exceeds our thoughts in measure, giving us more than we ask. Rachel would have a son ; God gives her two : Abraham sues that Ishmael may live ; God gives him to prosper, and to be the father of many princes. Yet more, He gives us what we cannot ask : the dumb Demoniack could not sue for himself : his very silence was vocal ; and receives what he would, and could not request. Yea, lastly, which is the great improvement of his mercy, He gives us against our asking : our ignorance sues against ourselves, requiring hurtful things ; He will not suffer our hearts and tongues to wrong us, but withholds what we unfitly crave, and gives us what we should, and do not crave : as the fond child cries to his father for a knife, he reaches him a spoon, that may feed, and not hurt him. O the ocean of divine bounty, boundless, bottomless !

O our wretched unworthiness, if we be either negligently to ourselves, in not asking blessings; or unthankful to our God, in not acknowledging them.—*Select Thoughts*, xxix.

The Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.—Rom. viii. 14. (*Epistle*.)

THIS word “led” implies both an act of God’s Spirit working in us, and our complying with that act in an obedient and ready conformity thereunto. For wherever the Spirit of God is, it is not idle and ineffectual; but it is still directing and inclining unto good: and whosoever is led by that Spirit yields himself to His motions and guidance. *Acti agimus*^s; as the old word is.

In all leading, therefore, and so in this, there must be a hand to guide and a foot to follow; good motions on God’s part, and motions in good on ours: both these must go together, else there is no leading by the Spirit of God. It is not enough that good thoughts are injected into us by

^s *Acti agimus*, being acted on, we act.

the Holy Spirit; yea, it is so far from availing us, as that a man is so much the worse for those good motions he entertains not as the motions are more excellent and divine. But those good injections must be received, embraced, delighted in, and followed home in a constant and habitual practice; with a resolute rejection and detestation of the contrary.

Besides that spirit of our mind⁹ which lodgeth in every breast, every man is led by some spirit or other. One is led by a spirit of error¹⁰ and seduction in matter of understanding; another by the spirit of giddiness¹, into wild fancies, and brain-sick imaginations; another is led by the spirit of bondage, to slavish fears and afflictive horrors²; another by the *spirit of the world*³; another, and indeed all these, by the unclean spirit, as he is usually styled in the Gospel; others, which are all the regenerate, *are led by the Spirit of God*⁴.—Sermon xxxix.

WILL ye see what leading of the Spirit can evince us to be the Sons and Daughters of God?

⁹ Eph. iv. 23.

¹ See Isa. xix. 14.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 12.

¹⁰ 1 Tim. iv. 1.

² Rom. viii. 15.

⁴ Rom. viii. 14.

Know then, that if we will hope for a comfortable assurance hereof, we must be efficaciously led by his sanctifying Spirit: first, in matter of Judgment; secondly, in our Dispositions; and thirdly, in our Practice.

For matter of Judgment: ye remember what our Saviour said to his disciples, *When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth*⁵; that is into all saving and necessary truths; so as to free us from gross ignorance or main error. Whosoever, therefore, is enlightened with the true and solid knowledge of all those points of Christian doctrine, which are requisite for salvation, is, in that first regard, led by the Spirit; and in this behalf, hath a just title to the sonship of God: as, contrarily, those that are grossly and obstinately erroneous in their judgment of fundamental truths, let them pretend to never so much holiness in heart or life, shall in vain lay claim to this happy condition of the Sons of God.

For our Disposition, secondly. If the Holy Spirit have wrought our hearts to be right with God in all our affections; if we do sincerely love and fear Him; if we do truly believe in Him, receiving Him as not our Saviour only, but as

⁵ John xvi. 13.

our Lord ; if our desires be unfeigned towards Him ; if after a meek and penitent self-dejection, we can find ourselves raised to a lively hope and firm confidence in that our Blessed Redeemer, and shall continue in a constant and habitual fruition of Him : being thus led by the Spirit of God, we may be assured that we are the Sons of God ; for flesh and blood cannot be accessory to these gracious dispositions.

Lastly, for our Practice. It is a clear word which we hear God say by Ezekiel, *I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them*⁶. Lo, herein is the main crisis of a soul that is led by the Spirit of God, and adopted to this heavenly sonship. It is not for us to content ourselves with talking of the laws of our God, and with making empty and formal professions of his name. Here must be a continued walk in God's statutes : it will not serve the turns for us, to stumble upon some acceptable work ; to step aside a little into the paths of godliness, and then draw back to the world. No, my beloved ; this leading of God's Spirit must neither be a forced angariation⁷, as if God would feoff⁸ grace and

⁶ Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

⁷ Angariation, compulsion.

⁸ Feoff, bestow.

salvation upon us against our wills; nor some sudden protrusion to good; nor a mere, actual, momentary, transient conduction, for a brunt of holiness and away, leaving us to the sinful ways of our former disobedience, and to our wonted compliances with the world, the devil, and the flesh: but must be in a steady, uninterrupted, habitual course of holy obedience; so as we may sincerely profess, with the man after God's own heart, *My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly*⁹.—Sermon xxxix.

Ye shall know them by their fruits.—St. Matthew vii. 16. (*Gospel.*)

THE life of a Christian is a life of action, not of speculation. The knowledge of God, the recognition of his presence, the fear of his displeasure, the desire of his approval, the appropriation of God to ourselves, conference, consultation, prayer, confidence, acknowledgment of favours, and lastly, the fruition of God; all are of that kind, which, because they can only be apprehended by the inward sense of one who professes to have them, and may very easily be

⁹ Ps. cxix. 167.

counterfeited by outward show, for the purposes of gain and honour, may be, and often are, assumed, and that without much difficulty. And oftentimes those very hypocrites, who betray their characters meanwhile most openly by their conduct, lay claim to these pious dispositions. Christ says, *Ye shall know them by their fruits*: not by the rind of an outward profession; not by the foliage of fair words; but by their fruits alone, is judgment to be passed upon those trees; and not our judgment only, but that of the Supreme Judge of all, at the last tribunal.—*Way of Enoch; or, the Manner of Walking with God.*

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

With many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.—1 Cor. x. 5.
(*Epistle.*)

As an angry child casts away that which is given him, because he hath not that he would, so do these foolish Israelites: their bread is light, and their water unsatisfying, because their way

displeased them. Was ever people fed with such bread or water? Twice hath the very rock yielded them water, and every day the heaven affords them bread. Did any one soul amongst them miscarry either for hunger or thirst? But no bread will down with them, save that which the earth yields; no water, but from the natural wells or rivers. Unless nature may be allowed to be her own carver, she is never contented.

Manna had no fault but that it was too good and too frequent: the pulse of Egypt had been fitter for these coarse mouths. This heavenly bread was unspeakably delicious; it tasted like wafers of honey; and yet even this angels' food is contemned. *The full soul loatheth an honey-comb* ¹⁰. How sweet and delicate is the Gospel! Not only the fathers of the Old Testament, but the angels desired to look into the glorious mysteries of it; and yet we are cloyed. This supernatural food is too light; the bread corn of our human reason and profound discourse would better content us.

Moses will not revenge this wrong, God will; yet will He not deal with them Himself, but He sends the fiery serpents to answer for Him: how

¹⁰ Prov. xxvii. 7.

fitly ! They had carried themselves like serpents to their governors : how often had they stung Moses and Aaron near to death ! If the serpent bite when he is not charmed, no better is a slanderer. Now these venomous adders revenge it, which are therefore called fiery because their poison scalded to death. God hath a hand in the annoyance and hurt of the basest creature : how much less can the sting of an ill tongue, or the malice of an ill spirit, strike us without Him ! While they were in Goshen, the frogs, lice, caterpillars, spared them, and plagued the Egyptians ; now they are rebellious in the desert, the serpents find them out and sting them to death. He, that brought the quails thither to feed them, fetches these serpents thither to punish them. While we are at war with God, we can look for no peace with his creatures : every thing rejoices to execute the vengeance of his Maker. The stones of the field will not be in league with us, while we are not in league with God.—*Contemplations upon the Old Testament, Book vii. Con. 2.*

And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness ; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.—St. Luke xvi. 9. (*Gospel.*)

I KNOW thee, O Lord, to be a munificent rewarder of all that serve thee ; yet, if thou shouldst give me no wages, I will serve thee ; if thou shouldst pay me with hunger, and stripes, and prisons, and death, I will serve thee. Away, base thoughts of earthly remuneration ; I will honour and serve thee, O God, for thine own sake, for thy service's sake ; yet I have no reason not to regard thine infinite bounty : it is no less than a crown that thou hast promised me ; and that I shall humbly aspire unto, and expect from thee, not as in the way of my merit, but of thy mere mercy. My service is free, in a zealous and absolute consecration to thee ; thy hand is more free, in my so gracious retribution. If thou be pleased to give thy servant such a weight of glory, the glory of that gift is thine. My service is out of my just duty ; thy reward is of thy grace, and divine beneficence. Do thou give me to do what thou biddest me, and then deal with me as thou wilt. As the glory of thy name is the drift of all my actions, so the glory that thou givest me cannot but redound to the glory of thine infinite mercy. Blessed be thy name, in what thou givest ; while thou makest me blessed in what I receive from thee.—*Soliloquies*, lxxviii.

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.—1 Cor. xii. 4—6. (*Epistle.*)

WHAT strange varieties do I find, in the workings of God with man ! One where I find Him gently and plausibly inviting men to their conversion ; another where, I find Him frightening some others to heaven ; some He trains up in a goodly education, and, without any eminent change, calls them forth to an exemplary profession of his name ; some others He chooseth out of a life notoriously lewd, to be the great patterns of a sudden reformation : one, that was only formal in his devotion without any true life of grace, is, upon a grievous sickness, brought to a lively sense of godliness ; another comes to God's house with a purpose to sleep or scoff, and, through the secret operations of God's Spirit working with his word, returns full of true compunction of heart, with tears in his eyes, and resolutions of present

amendment of life ; one, that was proud of his own righteousness, is suffered to fall into some foul sin, which shames him before men, and is thus brought down to an humble acknowledgment of his own frailty ; another, that was cast down with a sad despair of God's mercy, is raised up by the fall of an unbroken glass, or by some comfortable dream, or by the seasonable word of a cheerful friend ; one is called at the sixth hour, another, not till the eleventh ; one by fair and probable means, another by contraries ; so as even the work of Satan himself hath been made the occasion of the conversion of his soul. O God, thy ways are infinite and past finding out ! It is not for us to prescribe thee what to do, but humbly to adore thee in what thou doest. Far be it from me so to cast myself upon thy all-working Providence, as to neglect the ordinary means of my salvation. Enable me cheerfully to endeavour what thou requirest ; and then take what way thou pleasest ; so that thou bringest me to the end of my hope, the salvation of my soul.—*Soliloquies*, lix.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace !

but now they are hid from thine eyes.—St. Luke xix. 41, 42. (*Gospel.*)

PRESUME not, O man, whosoever thou art, of the liberty of thy conversion ; as if thou couldest run on lawlessly in a course of sinning, till thou come to the brim of hell, and then couldst suddenly stop, and return at leisure. The mercy of God never set period to a wilful sinner : neither yet did his own corrupt desires ; so as, when he is gone the furthest, he could yet stay himself from another step. No man, that truly repents, is refused ; but many a one sins so long, that he cannot repent. His custom of wickedness hath obdured his heart, and made it flint to all good impressions. There were Jeroboams, and Abijams, and Ahabs, and Joashes, and Ahazes ; in these sacred thrones there was but one Manasseh. God hath not left in any man's hand the reins of his own heart, to pace, and turn, and stop as he lists. This privilege is reserved to Him that made it. *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy*¹¹, and that mercy neglected justly binds over to judgment.—*Contemplations upon the Old Testament, Book xx. Con. 11.*

¹¹ Rom. ix. 16.

And they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another ;
because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.—
St. Luke xix. 44. (*Gospel.*)

O GOD, what place shall thy justice spare, if
Jerusalem have perished ? If that delight of thine
were cut off for her wickedness, *Be not highminded,*
but fear ¹.

What pity it was to see those goodly cedars of
the temple flaming up higher than they stood in
Lebanon ! To see those curious marbles, which
never felt the dent of the pickaxe or hammer in
the laying, wounded with mattocks, and wounding
the earth in their fall ! to see the Holy of Holies,
whereinto none might enter but the high priest,
once a year, thronged with pagans ; the vails
rent, the sacred ark of God violated and defaced,
the tables overturned, the altars broken down, the
pillars demolished, the pavements digged up, yea,
the very ground, where that famous pile stood,
deformed ! O God, thou wouldst rather have no
visible house upon earth, than endure it defiled
with idolatries.—*Contemplations upon the New*
Testament, Book xx. Con. 13.

¹ Rom. xi. 20.

The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.—1 Cor. xv. 10. (*Epistle.*)

O NOBLE and imitable fidelity of a dutiful servant, that prefers his Lord to himself, and is so far from stealing honour from his master's deserts that he willingly remits of his own to add unto his. The praise of the act shall, like fountain-water, return to the sea, whence it originally came. To seek a man's own glory is not glory. Alas, how many are there who, being sent to sue for God, woo for themselves! O God, it is a fearful thing to rob thee of that which is dearest to thee, glory; which, as thou wilt not give to any creature, so much less wilt thou endure that any creature should filch it from thee, and give it to himself. Have thou the honour of all our actions, who givest a being to our actions and us, and in both hast most justly regarded thine own praise.—*Contemplations upon the Old Testament, Book xv. Con. 3.*

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—St. Luke xviii. 14. (*Gospel.*)

THAT which wise Solomon observed in the temporal estates of men holds no less true in the spiritual: *There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches*². On the one side, we meet with a proud, but beggarly, Laodicean, that says, *I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing*; which will not know that he is *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*³; this man, when the means of further grace are tendered him, can say, as Esau did of the proffered herbs, *I have enough, my brother*⁴; and with the bragging Pharisee, can boast of what he is not, and of what he is; of what he hath, of what he doth; admiring his own nothing, and not caring to seek for more, because he thinks he hath all: this fond justiciary can overdo his duty and supererogate; contemning the poverty of souls better furnished than his own, and laying

² Prov. xiii. 7.

³ Rev. iii. 17.

⁴ Gen. xxxiii. 9.

his merits in the dish of the Almighty. On the other side, there is an humble soul, that is secretly rich in all spiritual endowments, full of knowledge, abounding in grace, which, out of the true poverty of spirit undervalues himself; and makes no shew of ought, but a bemoaned disability: as we have seen those grounds, wherein the richest mines are treasured, bewray nothing but barrenness in their outside. O my soul, what estimation soever others may set upon thee, thou art conscious enough of thy own wants; be thankful for the little thou hast, and abased for the much thou lackest; and if thou wilt needs be advancing thyself above others, let it be in the contestation of thy greater humbleness and lower dejection: thy grace shall be no less, because thou thinkest so, but shall rather multiply, by a modest diminution. And, O blessed Lord, thou, who *resistest the proud, but givest grace unto the humble*⁵, give me more humility, that I may receive more grace from thee: and thou, whose gracious rain shelves down from the steep mountains and sweetly drenches the humble valleys, depress thou my heart more and more with true lowliness of spirit, that the showers of thy hea-

⁵ See James iv. 6.

venly grace may soak into it, and make it more fruitful in all good affections and all holy obedience.—*Soliloquies*, lii.

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

If the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.
—2 Cor. iii. 9. (*Epistle.*)

OH the marvellous kindness of our God! How unthankful are we, if we do not acknowledge this mercy above his ancient people! They were his own; yet strangers, in comparison of our liberty. It is our shame and sin if in these means of entireness we be no better acquainted with God than they which in their greatest familiarity were commanded aloof.

God was ever wonderful in his works, and fearful in his judgments; but He was never so terrible in the execution of his will, as now in the promulgation of it. Here was nothing but a majestic terror in the eyes, in the ears of the Israelites; as if God meant to shew them by this how

fearful He could be. There was the lightning darted in their eyes, the thunders roaring in their ears, the trumpet of God drowning the thunderclaps, the voice of God outspeaking the trumpet of the angel: the cloud enwrapping, the smoke ascending, the fire flaming, the mount trembling, Moses climbing and quaking, paleness and death in the face of Israel, uproar in the elements, and all the glory of heaven turned into terror. In the destruction of the first world, there were clouds without fire; in the destruction of Sodom, there was fire raining without clouds; but here were fire, smoke, clouds, thunder, earthquakes, and whatsoever might work more astonishment than ever was in any vengeance inflicted.

If our God should exact his law but in the same rigour wherein He gave it, sin could not quit the cost: but now the fire wherein it was delivered, was but terrifying; the fire wherein it shall be required is consuming. Happy are those that are from under the terrors of that law, which was given in fire, and in fire shall be required.—*Contemplations upon the Old Testament, Book v. Con. 5.*

He hath done all things well : he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.—St. Mark vii. 37. (*Gospel.*)

WHAT means this variety of ceremony ? O Saviour, how many parts of thee are here active ! Thy finger is put into the ear ; thy spittle toucheth the tongue ; thine eyes look up ; thy lungs sigh ; thy lips move to an *Ephphatha*. Thy word alone, thy beck alone, thy wish alone, yea, the least act of velleity from thee, might have wrought this cure. Why wouldst thou employ so much of thyself in this work ? Was it to shew thy liberty in not always equally exercising the power of thy Deity ? in that, one while, thine only command shall raise the dead, and eject devils ; another while, thou wouldst accommodate thyself to the mean and homely fashions of natural agents, and, condescending to our senses and customs, take those ways, which may carry some more near respect to the cure intended ? Or, was it to teach us, how well thou likest that there should be a ceremonious carriage of thy solemn actions ; which thou pleasest to produce clothed with such circumstantial forms ?

It did not content thee, to put one finger into one ear ; but into either ear wouldst thou put a

finger. Both ears equally needed cure; thou wouldest apply the means of cure to both. The Spirit of God is the Finger of God. Then dost thou, O Saviour, put thy finger into our ear, when thy Spirit enables us to hear effectually. If we thrust our own fingers into our ears, using such human persuasions to ourselves as arise from worldly grounds, we labour in vain; yea these stoppels must needs hinder our hearing the voice of God. Hence, the great philosophers of the ancient world, the learned rabbins of the synagogue, the great doctors of a false faith, are deaf to spiritual things. It is only that finger of thy Spirit, O Blessed Jesu, that can open our ears, and make passage through our ears into our hearts. Let that finger of thine be put into our ears; so shall our deafness be removed, and we shall hear, not the loud thunders of the Law, but the gentle whisperings of thy gracious motions to our souls.

We hear for ourselves, but we speak for others. Our Saviour was not content to open the ears only, but to untie the tongue.

There are those whose ears are open, but their mouths are still shut to God. They understand, but do not utter, the wonderful things of God. There is but half a cure wrought upon these men:

their ear is but opened to hear their own judgment, except their mouth be open to confess their Maker and Redeemer. O God, do thou so moisten my tongue with thy graces, that it may run smoothly, as *the pen of a ready writer*⁶, to the praise of thy name!—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 2.*

The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid.
—Gal. iii. 21. (*Epistle.*)

THE manna and water from the rock (which was Christ in the Gospel) were given before the law; the sacraments of grace, before the legal covenant. The grace of God preventeth our obedience: therefore should we keep the law of God, because we have a Saviour. O the mercy of our God, which before we see what we are bound to do, shews us our remedy, if we do it

⁶. Ps. xlv. 1.

not! How can our faith disannul the law, when it was before it? It may help us to fulfil that which shall be; it cannot frustrate that which was not.

The letters, which God had written in our fleshy tables, were now, as those which are carved in some barks, almost grown out; He saw it time to write them in dead tables, whose hardness should not be capable of alteration: He knew that the stone would be more faithful than our hearts.

O marvellous accordance betwixt the two testaments! In the very time of their delivery, there is the same agreement which is in the substance. The ancient Jews kept our feasts, and we still keep theirs. The feast of the passover is the time of Christ's resurrection; then did He pass from under the bondage of death. Christ is our passover, the spotless Lamb whereof not a bone must be broken. The very day wherein God came down in fire and thunder to deliver the law, even the same day came also the Holy Ghost down upon the disciples in fiery tongues for the propagation of the Gospel. That other was in fire and smoke; obscurity was mingled with terror: this was in fire without smoke, befitting the light and clearness of the Gospel: fire,

not in flashes, but in tongues ; not to terrify, but to instruct. The promulgation of the Law makes way for the law of the Gospel : no man receives the Holy Ghost but he which hath felt the terrors of Sinai.—*Contemplations upon the Old Testament, Book v. Con. 5.*

But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour ?—St. Luke x. 29. (*Gospel.*)

SURELY if thousands of souls perish by the flattery of others, more perish by their own ; while their natural self-love soothes them with plausible, but untrue suggestions concerning their estate. Is the question concerning grace ? The false heart tells a man he is stored to superfluity and excess, when he is indeed more bare and beggarly than the proud pastor of Laodicea. Is the question of sin ? It proclaims him, not innocent only, but a saint ; it tells him his hands are pure, when he is up to the elbows in blood ; that his tongue is holy, when it is foul with perjury and blasphemy ; that his eye is honest and chaste, when it is full of adultery ; that his soul is clean, when it is defiled with abominable lusts, or with cruel rancour and malice. Is the question concerning virtue ? It tells a man he is just,

when he is all made up of rapine, and violent oppression; that he is eminently wise, when he hath not wit enough to know himself a fool; that he is free-handed and munificent, when he sticks not to rob beggars; that he is piously religious, while he pulls down churches. Thus is the man still hid from himself, and is made to see another in his own skin: he cannot repent, because he thinks himself faultless: he cannot amend, because he is ever at the best: his only ease and advantage is, that he is carried hoodwinked into hell. If the question be concerning some scrupulous act to be done or omitted, now self-respect plays its prizes at all weapons: what shifting and traversing there is, to avoid the dint of a present danger! what fine colours and witty equivocations doth the soul find out, to cozen itself into a safe offence! If the question be of a sinful act already committed, what a shuffling there is to face it out by a stout justification! maugre conscience, it was not lawful only, but, such as the circumstances were, expedient also: and, if it be so foul, that an apology is too odious, yet an extenuation cannot but be admitted; be it amiss, yet not heinous, not unmeet for pardon. One would think hell should have little need of the fawning assentation of others, when men carry so

dangerous parasites in their own bosoms: but, sure, both together must needs help people to that region of darkness. Take heed, O my soul, how thou givest way to these flattering thoughts, whether arising from thy own breast, or injected by others; and know, thou art never in more danger than when thou art most applauded. Look upon thine estate and actions with impartial and severe eyes. Behold thine own face, not in the false glass of opinion and mercenary adulation, but in the true and perfect glass of the royal law of thy Creator; that shall duly represent unto thee, whether the beauty of thy graces, or the blemishes of thy manifold imperfections; that alone shall tell thee how much thou art advanced in a gracious proficiency, and how shamefully defective thou art in what thou oughtedst to have attained. Judge of thyself by that unfailing rule; and be indifferent what thou art judged of by others.—*Soliloquies*, lxxv.

The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Led of [i. e. by] the Spirit.—Gal. v. 18. (*Epistle.*)

LET us inquire how a man may know whether he be truly *led by the Spirit of God*¹.

(1.) The Spirit of God leads no man but *in a right way*; and what is that, but the way of God's commandments? All other ways are ways of our own, oblique and crooked, as deviating from the straight line of righteousness. In them, either we lead ourselves, or Satan leads us: *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God*². God moves to holy duties, to just and charitable actions, and none but them; for He cannot be contrary to Himself. Is there any of us, therefore, that is carried on in a course of uncleanness, excess, disobedience, oppression, or any other sin whatsoever? Alas! we are led by a contrary spirit, in the dark ways that lead to death and hell. It were blasphemy, to father these sinful misleadings upon the Holy Spirit of God.

¹ Rom. viii. 14.

² James i. 13.

(2.) God's Spirit leads no man but *by a just rule*. That rule is the word of truth. In all matter of judgment that must direct us. Uncertain and variable traditions, private and ungrounded revelations, which are any way cross to this recorded will of God, are the deceitful guides of the Spirit of error. If, then, any frantic or superstitious person shall pretend any other direction than God hath given us in his revealed will, well may I say of him, as St. Paul dares say of an angel from heaven, if any such could be guilty of that offence, *Let him be accursed* ⁹.

(3.) God's Spirit leads his *sweetly and gently*; not in a blustering and hurrying violence, but by a leisurely and gracious inclination. So in Elijah's vision, there was fire, wind, earthquake; but God was in none of them: these were fit preparatives for his appearance; but it was the still soft voice, wherein God would be revealed ¹⁰. Those that are carried with a heady and furious impetuosity and vehemence of passion in all their proceedings, which are all rigour and extremity, are not led by that good Spirit which would be styled the Spirit of Meekness; who was pleased to descend, not in the form of an

⁹ Gal. i. 8.

¹⁰ See 1 Kings xix. 12.

eagle, or any other fowl of prey, but in the form of a meek and innocent dove.

(4.) God's Spirit leads on in a *constant way of progression* from grace to grace, from virtue to virtue ; like as the sun arises, by degrees, to his full meridian : whereas passion goes by sudden flashes, like lightning ; whereof the interruptions are as speedy and momentary, as the irruptions. The very word of leading implies a continuance ; neither can they be said to be led on, that make no proceedings in their way : if either, therefore, we go backward or stand still in goodness, if we promote not from strength to strength, we have no ground to think we are led by the Spirit of God.

(5.) Flesh and spirit are ever opposite one to the other, and go still contrary ways, and lead to contrary ends. *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*¹. Nature and Grace, which have their hands in this manuduction² both ways, stand in perpetual opposition to each other. If, therefore, we be led by our sensual appetite, to do and affect that, which is pleasing to corrupt nature, we are led by that blind guide, the flesh ; and if the blind lead the blind, it is no marvel if both of them fall

¹ Rom. viii. 13. ² *Manuduction*, leading by the hand.

into the pit of perdition : but if we mortify our evil and corrupt affections, crossing and curbing our exorbitant and sinful desires, and bringing them forcibly under the subjection of God's Spirit, now we may be assured to be led by the Spirit of God.—*Sermon xxxix.*

And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off.—St. Luke xvii. 12. (*Gospel.*)

SURELY, they were not verier lepers than we : why do we not imitate them in their actions, who are too like them in our condition ? Whither should we seek but to our Jesus ? How should we stand aloof, in regard of our own wretchedness ! How should we lift up our voice, in the fervour of our supplications ! What should we rather sue for, than mercy ? *Jesus, master, have mercy on us.*

O gracious prevention of mercy, both had and given ere it can be asked ! Jesus, when He saw them, said, *Go shew yourselves unto the priests.* Their disease is cured ere it can be complained of. Their shewing to the priest, presupposes them whole : whole in his grant, though not in

their own apprehension. That single leper that came to Christ before³, was first cured in his own sense, and then was bid to go to the priest, for approbation of the cure. It was not so with these, who are sent to the judges of leprosy with an intention they shall in the way find themselves healed. There was a different purpose in both these; in the one, that the perfection of the cure might be convinced, and seconded with a due sacrifice; in the other, that the faith of the patients might be tried in the way, which, if it had not held as strong in the prosecution of their suit as in the beginning, had, I doubt, failed of the effect. How easily might these lepers think, "Alas! to what purpose is this? Shew ourselves to the priests! What can their eyes do? They can judge whether it be cured, which we see yet it is not; they cannot cure it. This is not now to do. We have been seen enough and loathed. What can their eyes see more than our own? We had well hoped, that Jesus would have vouchsafed to call us to Him, and to lay his hands upon us, and to have healed us." These thoughts had kept them lepers still. Now shall their faith and obedience be proved, by their

³ See Mat. viii.; Luke v.

submission both to this sudden command, and that Divine ordination.

They obeyed, and went. What was the issue? *As they went, they were cleansed.* Lo, had they stood still, they had been lepers: now they went, they are whole. What haste the blessing makes to overtake their obedience!

The miracle indifferently wrought upon all, is differently taken. All went forward according to the appointment, toward the priests; all were obedient; one only was thankful. All were cured; all saw themselves cured; their sense was alike; their hearts were not alike.

How sensible wert thou, O Saviour, of thine own beneficence? *Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?* The trooping of these lepers together did not hinder thy reckoning. It is both justice and wisdom in thee to keep a strict account of thy favours. There is a wholesome and useful art of forgetfulness in us men, both of benefits done, and of wrongs offered. It is not so with God. Our injuries, indeed, He soon puts over; making it no small part of his

style, that He *forgives iniquities*⁴: but, for his mercies, there is no reason that He should forget them; they are worthy of more than our memory. His favours are universal over all his works; there is no creature that tastes not of his bounty: his sun and rain are for others, besides his friends: but none of his good turns escapes either his knowledge or record. Why should not we, O God, keep a book of our receipts from thee, which, agreeing with thine, may declare thee bounteous, and us thankful?

Our Saviour doth not ask this by way of doubt, but of exprobration⁵. Full well did He count the steps of those absent lepers. He knew where they were. He upbraids their ingratitude, that they were not where they should have been. It was thy just quarrel, O Saviour, that, while one Samaritan returned, nine Israelites were healed, and returned not. Had they been all Samaritans, this had been faulty; but now they were Israelites, their ingratitude was more foul than their leprosy. The more we are bound to God, the more shameful is our unthankfulness.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 11.*

⁴ See Exod. xxxiv. 7.

⁵ *Exprobration*, blame.

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.—Gal. vi. 14. (*Epistle.*)

How do I see poor worldlings please themselves in the conceit of their miserable proprieties! One thinks, *Is not this great Babylon, that I have built*⁶? Another, “Are not these my rich mines?” Another, “Is not this my royal and adored magnificence?” And how are those unstable minds transported with the opinion of these great, but indeed worthless peculiarities, which, after some little time, moulder with them into dust! How canst thou then be but pleasingly affected, O my soul, with the comfortable sense of having a God, a Saviour, and heaven of thine own! For in these spiritual and heavenly felicities, our right is not partial and divided, as it useth to be in secular inheritances; so as that every one hath his share distinguished from the rest, and parcelled out of the whole: but here,

⁶ Dan. iv. 30.

each one hath all; and this blessed patrimony is communicated to all saints, as that the whole is the propriety of every one.—*The Soul's Farewell to Earth*, § 8.

I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.—St. Matthew vi. 29. (*Gospel*.)

THIS must needs be a goodly flower that our Saviour hath singled out to compare with Solomon; and that not in his ordinary dress, but in all his royalty. Surely the earth had never so glorious a king as he. Nature yielded nothing, that might set forth royal magnificence, that he wanted; yet He that made Solomon and this flower says, *that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed liked one of these*.

O God, let it be my ambition to walk with thee hereafter in white. Could I put on a robe of stars here, with proud Herod, that glittering garment could not keep me safe from worms. Might I sit on a throne of gold within a house of ivory, I see I should not compare with this flower: I might be as transitory; I should not be so beautiful. What matters it, whether I go for a flower, or a weed here? Whethersoever, I must wither.

O thou which art greater than Solomon, do thou clothe me with thy perfect righteousness: so shall I flourish for ever in the courts of the house of my God.—*Occasional Meditations*, lxxxv.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—St. Matthew vi. 33. (*Gospel*.)

A FALSE method is the bane of many hopeful endeavours, God bids us seek first his kingdom, and earthly things shall find us unsought. Foolish nature first seeks the world: and if she light on God by the way, it is more than she expects, desires, cares for; and, therefore, fails of both, because she seeks neither aright. Many had been great, if they had cared to be good: which now are crossed in what they would, because they willed not what they ought. If Solomon had made wealth his first suit, I doubt he had been both poor and foolish: now, he asked wisdom and gained greatness! because he chose well, he received what he asked not. O the bounty and fidelity of our God! because we would have the best, He gives us all: earth shall wait upon us, because we attend upon heaven.—*Epistle* iii. *Decade* i.

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.—St. Matthew vi. 34. (*Gospel.*)

Lo, every day hath its evil, and that evil is load enough for the present, without the further charge of our anticipated cares. Surely, the life of man is conflicted with such a world of crosses succeeding each other, that, if he have not a sure refuge to flee unto, he cannot but be quite overlaid with miseries: one while, his estate suffers, whether through casualty or oppression; another while, his children miscarry, whether by sickness, or death, or disorder; one while, his good name is impeached; another while, his body languishes; one while, his mind is perplexed with irksome suits; another while, his soul is wounded with the sting of some secret sin; one while, he is fretted with domestic discontents; another while, distempered with the public broils; one while, the sense of evil torments him; another while, the expectation. Miserable is the case of that man who, when he is pursued with whole troops of mischiefs, hath not a fort wherein to succour himself; and safe and happy is that soul, that hath a sure and impregnable hold, whereto he may resort. O the noble example of holy David! never man could be more perplexed than

he was at his Ziklag; his city burnt, his whole stock plundered, his wives carried away, his people cursing, his soldiers mutinying, pursued by Saul, cast off by the Philistines, helpless, hopeless; *But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God*¹. There, there, O Lord, is a sure help, in the time of trouble; a safe protection, in the time of danger; a most certain remedy of all complaints; let my dove get once into the holes of that rock, in vain shall all the birds of prey hover over me for my destruction.—*Soliloquies*, xxv.

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.—Eph. iii. 17. (*Epistle*.)

BEHOLD, if Solomon built a temple unto thee, thou hast built a temple unto thyself, in us. We are not only, through thy grace, living stones in thy temple, but living temples in thy Sion. Oh

¹ 1 Sam. xxx. 6.

do thou ever dwell in this thy house ; and in this thy house let us ever serve thee. Wherefore else hast thou a temple, but for thy presence with us, and for our worshipping of thee ? The time was, when, as thy people, so thyself, didst lodge in flitting tents, ever shifting, ever moving : thence, thou thoughtest best to sojourn, both in Shiloh, and the roof of Obed-edom. After that, thou condescendest to settle thine abode with men, and wouldst dwell in a house of thine own, at thy Jerusalem. So didst thou, in the beginning, lodge with our first parents, in a tent, sojourn with Israel, under the Law ; and now makest a constant residence, under the Gospel, in the hearts of thy chosen children, from whence thou wilt remove no more : they shall remove from the world, from themselves ; thou shalt not remove from them.

Wheresoever thou art, O God, thou art worthy of adoration. Since thou ever wilt dwell in us, be thou ever worshipped in us. Let the altars of our clean hearts send up ever to thee the sweetest perfume of our holy meditations, and faithful prayers, and cheerful thanksgivings. Let the pure lights of our faith and godly conversation shine ever before thee and men, and never be put out. Let the bread of life stand ever ready,

upon the pure and precious tables of our hearts. Lock up thy law and thy manna within us; and speak comfortably to us from thy mercy-seat. Suffer nothing to enter in hither that is unclean. Sanctify us unto thyself, and be thou sanctified in us.—*Meditations upon the Old Testament, Book xvii. Con. 5.*

And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledgo.
—Eph. iii. 19. (*Epistle.*)

O BLESSED Jesu, that thou hast loved us, we know; but how much thou hast loved us, is past the comprehension of angels. Those glorious spirits, as they desire to look into the deep mystery of our redemption, so they wonder to behold that divine love whereby it is wrought; but they can no more reach to the bottom of it than they can affect to be infinite: for, surely, no less than an endless line can serve to fathom a bottomless depth. Such, O Saviour, is the abyss of thy love to miserable man. Alas! why do we poor wretched dust of the earth go about to measure it by the spans and inches of our shallow thoughts? Far, far be such presumption from us: only admit us, O blessed Lord, to look at, admire, and adore that which we give up for incomprehensible.—*Meditation on the Love of Christ, § 1.*

Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.—St. Luke vii. 12. (*Gospel.*)

WHEN she gave herself up for a forlorn mourner, past all capacity of redress, the God of comfort meets her, pities her, relieves her. Here was no solicitor, but his own compassion. On other occasions He was sought and sued to. The centurion comes to Him for a servant; the ruler for a son; Jairus for a daughter; the neighbours for the paralytic: here He seeks up the patient, and offers the cure unrequested. While we have to do with the Father of mercies, our afflictions are the most powerful suitors. No tears, no prayers, can move Him, so much as his own commiseration. O God, none of our secret sorrows can be either hid from thine eyes, or kept from thy heart; and when we are past all our hopes, all possibilities of help, then art thou nearest to us for deliverance.

Here was a conspiracy of all parts to mercy. The heart had compassion; the mouth said, *Weep not*; the feet went to the bier; the hand touched the coffin; the power of the Deity raised the dead. What the heart felt was secret to itself;

the tongue therefore expresses it in words of comfort, *Weep not*. Alas! what are words to so strong and just passions? To bid her not to weep, that had lost her only son, was to persuade her to be miserable and not feel it; to feel and not regard it; to regard and yet to smother it. Concealment doth not remedy but aggravate sorrow. That with the counsel of not weeping therefore she might see cause of not weeping, his hand seconds his tongue. He arrests the bier, and frees the prisoner; *Young man, I say unto thee, arise*. The Lord of life and death speaks with command. No finite power could have said so without presumption or with success. That is the voice that shall one day call up our vanished bodies from those elements into which they are resolved, and raise them out of their dust. Neither sea, nor death, nor hell can offer to detain their dead when He charges them to be delivered. Incredulous nature! What, dost thou shrink at the possibility of a resurrection when the God of nature undertakes it? It is no more hard for that Almighty word, which gave being unto all things, to say, "Let them be repaired," than, "Let them be made."

Death hath no power to bid that man lie still whom the Son of God bids *arise*. Immediately

He that was dead sat up. So, at the sound of the last trumpet, by the power of the same voice, we shall arise out of the dust, and stand up glorious. *This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality*^a. This body shall not be buried, but sown; and, at our day, shall therefore spring up, with a plentiful increase of glory. How comfortless, how desperate, would be our lying down, if it were not for this assurance of rising! And now, behold, lest our weak faith should stagger at the ascent to so great a difficulty, He hath already, by what He hath done, given us tastes of what He will do. The power that can raise one man, can raise a thousand, a million, a world: no power can raise one man but that which is infinite, and that which is infinite admits of no limitation.

Under the Old Testament, God raised one by Elijah, another by Elisha living, a third by Elisha dead: by the hand of the Mediator of the New Testament, He raised here the son of the widow, the daughter of Jairus, Lazarus: and, in attendance upon his own resurrection, He made a gaol-delivery of holy prisoners at Jerusalem. He raises the daughter of Jairus from her bed, this

^a 1 Cor. xv. 53.

widow's son from his bier, Lazarus from his grave, the dead saints of Jerusalem from their corruption; that it might appear no degree of death can hinder the efficacy of his overruling command. He that keeps the keys of death can not only make way for himself through the common hall and outer rooms, but through the inwardest and most reserved closets of darkness.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iii. Con. 1.*

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.—Eph. iv. 3. (*Epistle.*)

THE kingdom of God doth not stand in meats and drinks; in stuffs, or colours, or fashions; in noises, or gestures; it stands in holiness and righteousness; in godliness and charity; in peace and obedience; and, if we have happily attained unto these, God doth not stand upon trifles and niceties of indifferences; and why should we?

Away then with all false jealousies and un-

charitable glosses of each other's actions and estates. Let us all, in the fear of God, be entreated in the bowels of our dear Redeemer, as we love ourselves, our land, our Church, the Gospel, to combine our counsels and endeavours to the holding of the *unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*; and labour and study, not how to widen or gall and rankle, but how to salve and heal those unhappy sores of the Church and State; by confining our desires within the due bounds, free from encroachments, from innovations; by a discreet moderation in all our prosecutions; by a meek relenting even in due challenges; by a fair and charitable construction of each other's acts and intentions; and lastly, by our fervent persuasions and prayers: and so many as are thus minded, peace be upon them, and upon the whole Israel of God, this day, and for ever, Amen.—
Sermon xxxii.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.—Eph. iv. 4. (*Epistle.*)

THE whole Church is the spiritual temple of God. Every believer is a living stone, laid in those sacred walls; what is our Christian love, but the mortar or cement, whereby these stones are fast joined together, to make up this heavenly

building? without which, that precious fabric could not hold long together; but would be subject to disjoining, by those violent tempests of opposition, wherewith it is commonly beaten upon. There is no place for any loose stone in God's edifice; the whole Church is one entire body; all the limbs must be held together by the ligaments of Christian love; if any one will be severed, and affect to subsist of itself, it hath lost its place in the body. Thus the Apostle: that we, *speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love*⁹.

But in case there happen to be differences in opinion, concerning points not essential, not necessary to salvation; this diversity may not breed an alienation of affection. That charity, which can cover a multitude of sins, may much more cover many small dissensions of judgment. We cannot hope to be all, and at all times, equally enlightened. At how many and great weaknesses

⁹ Eph. iv. 15, 16.

of judgment did it please our merciful Saviour to connive, in his domestic disciples! they that had so long sat at the sacred feet of Him that spake as never man spake, were yet to seek of those Scriptures which had so clearly foretold his resurrection¹: and after that were at a fault for the manner of his kingdom²: yet He that breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax, falls not harshly upon them for so foul an error and ignorance; but entertains them with all loving respect, not as followers only, but as *friends*³. And his great Apostle, after he had spent himself in his unweariable endeavours upon God's Church, and had sown the seeds of wholesome and saving doctrine every where, what rank and noisome weeds of erroneous opinions rose up under his hand in the Churches of Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Colosse, Philippi, and Thessalonica! These he labours to root out, with much zeal, with no bitterness: so opposing the errors, as not alienating his affection from the Churches. These, these must be our precedents.—*Christ Mystical*, § 2.

¹ See John xx. 9.² Acts i. 6.³ John xv. 15.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism.—Eph. iv. 5. (*Epistle.*)

WHAT is it here below that makes the Church one? *One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.* *One Lord*; so it is one in the head: *One Faith*; so it is one in the heart: *One Baptism*; so it is one in the face. Where these are truly professed to be, though there may be differences of administrations and ceremonies, though there may be differences in opinions, yet there is *Columba una*: all those are but diversely-coloured feathers of the same Dove. What Church therefore hath *One Lord*, Jesus Christ the Righteous, *One Faith* in that Lord, *One Baptism* into that Faith, it is the one Dove of Christ. To speak more short, *One Faith* abridges all. But what is that one Faith? What but the main fundamental doctrine of religion necessary to be known, to be believed unto salvation? It is a golden and useful distinction, that we must take with us, betwixt Christian articles and theological conclusions. Christian articles are the principles of religion necessary to a believer; theological conclusions are school points, fit for the discourse of a divine. Those articles are few and essential; these conclusions are many

and unimporting (upon necessity) to salvation either way. That Church then, which holds those Christian articles, both in terms and necessary consequences, as every visible Church of Christ doth, however it vary in these theological conclusions, is *Columba una*. Were there not much latitude in this Faith, how should we fetch in the ancient Jewish Church to the unity of the Christian? Theirs and ours is but one Dove; though the feathers, according to the colour of that fowl, be changeable. It is a fearful account then, that shall once be given before the dreadful tribunal of the Son of God, the only Husband of this one Church, by those men, who, not like the children of faithful Abraham, divide the Dove; multiplying Articles of Faith according to their own fancies; and casting out of the bosom of the Church those Christians that differ from their either false or unnecessary conclusions.—*Sermon xvii.*

Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—St. Luke xiv. 11.
(*Gospel.*)

EVEN the good man of the house will say, *Friend, go up higher*⁴. For, though with vain

⁴ Luke xiv. 10.

men he is most set by that can most set out himself; yet, with the wiser, the more a man dejects himself, the more he is honoured. It cannot stand with the justice of the truly virtuous, to suffer a man to be a loser by his humility: much less will God abide it. *The Lord lifteth up the meek*⁵, saith David, out of good proof; and needs must he rise whom God lifteth.

What, should we need any other precedent of this virtue, or other example of this reward, than our blessed Saviour Himself? All other are worthy of forgetfulness in comparison: *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*⁶.

O God, what an incomprehensible dejection was here! That the living God should descend from the highest glory of heaven, and put upon Him the rags of our humanity: and take on Him, not the man only, but the servant, yea the malefactor: abasing Himself to our infirmities, to our

⁵ Ps. cxlvii. 6.

⁶ Phil. ii. 6—8.

indignities; to be reviled, spat upon, scourged, wounded, crucified: yea, all these are easy tasks to that which follows; to be made a mark of his Father's wrath in our stead: so as, in the bitterness of his soul, he is forced to cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*⁷ What heart of man, yea what apprehension of angels, can be capable of fathoming the depth of this humiliation?

Answerable to thy dejection, O Saviour, was thine exaltation; as the conduit water rises at least as high as it falls. Now is thy name *above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth*⁸. Neither meanest thou to be our Saviour only, but our pattern too. I do not hear thee say, "Learn of me, for I am almighty, I am omniscient;" but *Learn of me, for I am meek*⁹. If we can go down the steps of thine humiliation, we shall rise up the stairs of thy glory.—*Sermon xx.*

⁷ Mat. xxvii. 46.

⁸ Phil. ii. 9, 10.

⁹ Mat. xi. 29.

The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Christ Jesus; that in every thing ye are enriched by him.—1 Cor. i. 4, 5. (*Epistle.*)

IN all other things we are led by profit; but in the main matter of all we shew ourselves utterly unthriftly: and, while we are wise in making good markets in these base commodities, we shew ourselves foolish in the great match of our souls. God and the world come both to one shop, and make proffers for our souls: the world, like a frank chapman, says, *All these things will I give thee*¹; shewing us his bags and promotions, and thrusting them into our hands: God offers a crown of glory, which yet He tells us we must give Him day to perform; and have nothing in present, but our hope and some small earnest of the bargain: though we know there is no comparison betwixt these two in value, finding these earthly things vain and unable to give any contentment, and those others of invaluable worth

¹ Mat. iv. 9.

and benefit; yet we would rather take these in hand than trust God on his word for the future, while yet, in the same kind, we choose rather to take some rich lordship in reversion, after the long expectation of three lives expired, than a present sum much under foot. As, contrarily, when God and the world are sellers, and we come to the mart, the world offers fine painted wares, but will not part with them under the price of our torment: God proclaims, *Come buy, without money and without price*²: now, we thrifty men, that try all shops for the cheapest pennyworth, refuse God, proffering his precious commodities for nothing, and pay a hard price for that which is worse than nothing, painful. Surely, we are wise for any thing but our souls: not so wise for the body, as foolish for them. O Lord, thy payment is sure; and who knows how present? Take the soul that thou hast both made and bought; and let me rather give my life for thy favour, than take the offers of the world for nothing.—*Meditations and Vows*, xxxii. Cent. 3.

² Isa. lv. 1.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.—St. Matthew xxii. 37—39. (*Gospel.*)

As love keeps the whole law, so love only is the breaker of it; being the ground, as of all obedience, so of all sin; for, whereas sin hath been commonly accounted to have two roots, love and fear, it is plain that fear hath his original from love; for no man fears to lose ought, but what he loves. Here is sin, and righteousness, brought both into a short sum; depending both upon one poor affection. It shall be my only care, therefore, to bestow my love well, both for object and measure. All that is good I may love, but in several degrees: what is simply good, absolutely: what is good by circumstance, only with limitation. There be these three things, that I may love without exception, God, my neighbour, my soul; yet so as each have their due place: my body, goods, fame, &c., as servants to the former. All other things, I will either not care for, or hate.—*Meditations and Vows*, xxv. Cent. 3.

The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.—Eph. iv. 22—24. (*Epistle.*)

EVERY man is ready to challenge this honour of being renewed: and, certainly, there may be much deceit this way. We have seen plate or other vessels, that have looked like new, when they have been but new gilded or burnished: we have seen old faces, that have counterfeited a youthly smoothness and vigorous complexion: we have seen hypocrites act every part of renovation, as if they had fallen from heaven. Let us, therefore, take a trial, by those proofs of examination that cannot fail us.

If we be renewed by Creation, here must be a Clean Heart. *Cor mundum crea*, saith the Psalmist³. For, as at the first, God looked on all his works, and found them very good; so still, no

³ Ps. li. 10.

work of his can be other than like Himself, holy and perfect. If thy heart, therefore, be still full of unclean thoughts, wanton desires, covetousness, ambition, profaneness, it is thine old heart of Satan's marring; it is no new heart of God's making, for nothing but clean can come from under his hands. But if we plead the closeness of the heart, which may therefore seem impervious even to our own eyes, see what the Apostle saith, *We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*⁴. The cleanness of the heart will shew itself in the goodness of the Hands. But if our hands may deceive us, as nothing is more easily counterfeited than a good action, yet our Feet will not; I mean, the trade of our ways.

That, therefore, from our Creation we may look to our Regeneration; if we be the sons of God, we are renewed: and how shall it appear whether we be the sons of God? It is a golden rule, *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*⁵. Yet, if, in both of these, life could be counterfeited, death cannot.

That, therefore, from our Creation and Regeneration we may look to our Resuscitation, and from thence, back to our grave: *Mortify your*

⁴ Eph. ii. 10.

⁵ Rom. viii. 14.

*members which are upon the earth*⁶. There is a death of this body of sin; and what manner of death? *They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*⁷. Lo, as impossible as it is for a dead man to come down from his gibbet, or up from his coffin, and to do the works of his former life; so impossible it is, that a renewed man should do the works of his unregeneration.

If, therefore, you find your Hearts unclean, your Hands idle and unprofitable, your Ways crooked and unholy, your Corruptions alive and lively, never pretend any renewing: you are the old men still; and however ye may go for Christians, yet ye have denied the power of Christianity in your lives.—*Sermon xix.*

And Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.
—St. Matthew ix. 2. (*Gospel.*)

DEAR Christians, let every one of us look in what terms he stands with his God. Do we find the face of God clouded from us? let our souls refuse comfort, till we have recovered his favour,

⁶ Col. iii. 5.

⁷ Gal. v. 24.

which is better than life. Do we find ourselves, upon our sound repentance, received to grace and favour of the Almighty; and that He is well pleased with our persons, and with our poor obediences; and that He smiles upon us in heaven? Courage, dear brethren, in spite of all the frowns and menaces of the world: we are safe, and shall be happy. *God comforteth us in all our tribulation*^s.—*Sermon xxxvi.*

The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Eph. v. 20. (*Epistle.*)

It shall be expedient for the soul, duly to recount to itself all the specialties of God's favours. A confused thanks savours of carelessness; and neither doth affect us, nor win acceptance above. Bethink yourselves, then, of all these external, inferior, earthly graces; that your being, breathing,

^s 2 Cor. i. 4.

life, motion, reason, are from Him ; that He hath given you a more noble nature than the rest of the creatures, excellent faculties of mind, perfection of senses, soundness of body, competency of estate, seemliness of condition, fitness of calling, preservation from dangers, rescue out of miseries, kindness of friends, carefulness of education, honesty of reputation, liberty of recreations, quietness of life, opportunity of well doing, protection of angels. Then, rise higher, to his spiritual favours, though here on earth ; and strive to raise your affections with your thoughts : bless God, that you were born in the light of the Gospel ; for your profession of the truth ; for the honour of your vocation ; for your incorporating into the church ; for the privilege of the sacraments, the free use of the Scriptures, the communion of saints, the benefit of their prayers, the aid of their counsels, the pleasure of their conversation ; for the beginnings of regeneration, any footsteps of faith, hope, love, zeal, patience, peace, joy, conscionableness ; for any desire of more. Then, let your soul mount highest of all, into her heaven ; and acknowledge those celestial graces of her election to glory, redemption from shame and death ; of the intercession of her Saviour ; of the preparation of her place ; and there let her

stay awhile, upon the meditation of her future joys.—*Epistles, Decade iii. Ep. 8.*

Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.—St. Matthew xxii. 13. (*Gospel.*)

WHAT a torment shall it be to the wicked to be shut out for ever from the presence of a God, without all possible hopes of recovery! God is the Father of Spirits, in whom we so live, that without Him can be no life, no being. To be ever excluded from Him, in whom we live and are, what can it be but an eternal dying, an eternal perishing? If in thy presence, O God, be the fulness of joy, in thine absence must needs be the fulness of horror and torment. Hide not thy face from us, O Lord, but shew us the light of thy countenance, that we may live and praise thee.—*Contemplations upon the Old Testament, Book xv. Con. 7.*

The Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.—Eph. vi. 12. (*Epistle.*)

THOU art affrighted at the thought of thy spiritual enemies;—no marvel; neither earth nor hell hath any thing equally formidable. Those three things which are wont to make enmity dreadful and dangerous, (power, malice, subtlety,) are met in them: neither is it easy to say in which of these they are most eminent. Certainly, were we to be matched with them on even hand, there were just cause; not of fear only, but of despair.

“I could tremble,” thou sayest, “to think that Satan hath done what he can do. What contestation he enabled the Egyptian sorcerers to hold with Moses; how they turned every man his rod into a serpent; so as they seemed to have the advantage, for the time, of many serpents crawling and hissing in Pharaoh’s pavement for one⁹;

⁹ Exod. vii. 11, 12.

how they turned the waters into blood¹; how they brought frogs upon the land of Egypt²:" as if, thus far, the power of hell would presume to hold competition with heaven. What furious tempests he raises in the air; as that, which, from the wilderness, beat upon the four corners of the house of Job's eldest son, and overthrew it³: lo, *Job was the greatest of all the men of the east*⁴; his heir did not dwell in a cottage: that strong fabric could not stand against this hurricane of Satan. What fearful apparitions he makes in the upper regions: what *great wonders* he doth, *so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men*⁵. Lastly, what grievous tyranny he exerciseth upon all the *children of disobedience*⁶.

Couldst thou look for any less, my son, from those, whom the Spirit of God Himself styles, *principalities and powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickednesses in high places, and the prince of the power of the air*⁷? Surely, it were no mastery to be a Christian, if we had not powerful opposites.

¹ Exod. vii. 22.

² Exod. viii. 7.

³ Job i. 19.

⁴ Job i. 3.

⁵ Rev. xiii. 13.

⁶ Eph. v. 6.

⁷ Eph. vi. 12; ii. 2.

But dost thou not withal consider, that all this power is by concession; and the exercise of it but with permission, with limitation? What power can there be in any creature, which is not derived from the Almighty? This measure the Infinite Creator was pleased to communicate to them, as angels; which they retain and exercise still, as devils: their damnation hath stripped them of their glory; but we know not of how much of their strength.

And, seest thou not how their power is bounded? Those, that could, in appearance, turn their rods into serpents, could not keep all their serpents from being devoured of that one serpent of Moses: those, that could bring frogs upon Egypt, cannot bring a baser creature, lice: those, that were suffered to bring frogs, shall not have power to take them away⁸. Restrained powers must know their limits; and we, knowing them, must set limits to our fears. A lion chained up can do less harm than a cur let loose. What is it to thee, how powerful the evil spirits are, while they are, by an overruling power, tied up to their stake, that they cannot hurt thee?—*The Balm of Gilead, Chap. xvii. § 1.*

⁸ See Exod. viii. 12. 18, 19. 11.

BE not dismayed, my son. Couldst thou borrow the eyes of the servant of a holier master, thou shouldst see that *they that be with us are more than they that be with them*⁹. Thou shouldst see the blessed angels of God pitching their tents about thee; as the more powerful, vigilant, constant guardians of thy soul : lo, these are those valiant ones, which *stand about thy bed : they all hold swords, being expert in war : every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night*¹.

Fear not, therefore ; but make *the Lord, even the most high, thy habitation*. Then, *there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone*. Yea, and, besides this safe indemnity, *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder : the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet*².—*Ibid.* § 2.

⁹ 2 Kings vi. 16.

¹ Cant. iii. 7, 8.

² Ps. xci. 9—13.

Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.—St. John iv. 48. (*Gospel.*)

It was a foul fault, and a dangerous one, *Ye will not believe*. What is it that shall condemn the world, but unbelief? What can condemn us, without it? No sin can condemn the repentant. Repentance is a fruit of faith: where true faith is, then, there can be no condemnation; as there can be nothing but condemnation without it. How much more foul in a noble Capernaite, that had heard the sermons of so Divine a Teacher! The greater light we have, the more shame it is for us to stumble. Oh what will become of us, that reel and fall in the clearest sunshine that ever looked forth upon any church! Be merciful to our sins, O God; and say any thing of us, rather than, *Ye will not believe*.

Our Saviour tells him of his unbelief. He feels not himself sick of that disease. All his mind is on his dying son. As easily do we complain of bodily griefs, as we are hardly affected with spiritual.

Oh the meekness and mercy of this Lamb of God! When we would have looked that He should have punished this suitor for not believing, He condescends to him, that he may believe: *Go*

thy way ; thy son liveth. If we should measure our hopes by our own worthiness, there were no expectation of blessings ; but if we shall measure them by his bounty and compassion, there can be no doubt of prevailing.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iii. Con. 2.*

The Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.—Phil. i. 6. (*Epistle.*)

THOU art weak :—thy God is strong. Dost thou not see the feeble child that finds he cannot go alone, how fast he clings to the hand of his mother ; more trusting to her help, than to his own strength ? Do thou so to thy God ; and say, with the blessed Psalmist, *Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not*³. *Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe. Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live : and let me not be*

³ Ps. xvii. 5.

ashamed of my hope ⁴. Peter was a bold man, that durst step forth, and set his foot upon the liquid face of the waters : but he, that ventured to walk there upon the strength of his faith, when he felt the stiff wind and saw the great billow, began to sink in his weakness ; but no sooner had Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, than he takes courage, and walks now with the same confidence upon the sea that he was wont to walk upon the land. Together with a check, he receives more supportation from Christ than his own legs could afford him ⁵. Fear no miscarriage through thine own weakness, while thou art held up by that strong helper.—*The Balm of Gilead, Chap. iv. § 8.*

Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.—St. Matthew xviii. 27. (*Gospel.*)

It is the wonderful mercy of God, both to forgive us our debts to Him in our sins, and to make Himself a debtor to us in his promises ; so that now, both ways, the soul may be sure ; since He neither calleth for those debts which He hath once forgiven, nor withdraweth those favours and that

⁴ Ps. cxix. 117, 116.

⁵ Mat. xiv. 29—31.

heaven which He hath promised : but as He is a merciful creditor to forgive, so He is a true debtor to pay whatsoever He hath undertaken. Whence it is come to pass, that the penitent sinner owes nothing to God, but love and obedience ; and God owes still much and all to Him : for He owes as much as He hath promised ; and what He owes, by virtue of his blessed promise, we may challenge. O infinite mercy ! He, that lent us all that we have, and in whose debt-books we run hourly forward till the sum be endless ; yet owes us more, and bids us look for payment. I cannot deserve the least favour He can give ; yet will I as confidently challenge the greatest, as if I deserved it. Promise indebteth no less, than loan or desert.—*Meditations and Vows, v. Cent. 3.*

The Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.—Phil. iii. 18. (*Epistle.*)

IT is no small grief to any good heart, that loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity, to see how utterly unanswerable the greater sort of men, that bear the name of Christ, are to the example and precepts of that Christ, whose name they bear. He was humble and meek; they, proud and insolent: He bade us love our enemies; they hardly can love their friends: He prayed for his persecutors; they curse: He, that had the command of all, cared not to possess any thing; they, not having right to much, would possess all: He bade us give our coat also to him that takes our cloak; they take both coat and cloak from him that hath it: He bade us turn our cheek for the other blow; they will be sure to give two blows for one: He paid obedience to a foster-father and tribute to Cæsar; they despise government: his trade was only doing good, spending the night in praying, the day in preaching and healing; they debauch

their time, revelling away the night, and sleeping away or misspending the day : He forbade oaths ; they not only swear and forswear, but blaspheme too : He bade us make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness ; they make mammon their God : He bade us take up his cross ; they impose their own : He bade us lay up our treasure in heaven ; they place their heaven in earth : He bids us give to them that ask ; they take violently from the owners : He bade us return good, for evil ; they, for good, return evil : He charged his disciples to love one another ; they nourish malice and rancour against their brethren : He left peace, for a legacy to his followers ; they are apt to set the world on fire : his business was to save ; theirs, to destroy. O God, let *rivers of waters run down mine eyes*, because they do no better keep the law of thy Gospel⁶. Give grace to all, that are called by thy Name, to walk worthy of that high profession, whereto they are called : and keep me, thy unworthy servant, that I may never deviate from that blessed pattern, which thou hast set before me. Oh, let me never shame that great name that is put upon me. Let me, in all things, approve myself a Christian in earnest ; and so conform myself to thee, in all

⁶ See Ps. cxix. 136.

thy examples and commands, that it may be no dishonour to thee to own me for thine!—*Soliloquies*, ix.

Render . . . unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.—St. Matthew xxii. 21. (*Gospel*.)

CHRIST is Cæsar's Lord; Cæsar is Christ's deputy. The deputed power is not against the original; but, as by it, so for it. There can be no contrariety in subordination. So is Cæsar to Christ, as earth is to heaven; under, not against it. All the life and motion of any earthly creature is from the influences of heaven; without which, this whole globe were nothing but a dull and drossy clod.

And, as here is subordination one way, so diversity another. Pilate questioned our Saviour punctually of his kingdom: *Art thou a King*? He denies not; but distinguishes: *My kingdom is not of this world*^s. Lo, Christ's kingdom was not of this world; Cæsar's was not of the other. Here can be no danger of opposition.

Let the great Cæsars of the world then know

⁷ John xviii. 37.

^s John xviii. 36.

that the more subject they are to Christ, the more sure they are of the loyalty of their subjects to themselves. Neither is there, in all the world, any so firm and strait bond to tie the hearts of their people to them, as true religion to God.

To conclude, therefore, Christ is not Cæsar's rival, but Cæsar's lord and patron. Cæsar rules by his laws; Christ, by religion. If execution be the life of laws, I am sure religion is the life of execution. In short, religion is the strongest pillar of policy; the base of the palace; the feet and arms of the chair of state; the frame of the council-board.

As ye love your peace, ye great ones, make much of it: plant it where it is not; enlarge it, where it is: maintain it, at home; encourage it, abroad. And if distressed religion shall come, with her face blubbered and her garments rent, wringing her hands and tearing her hair, and shall prostrate herself at the feet of earthly greatness for lawful succour, with "*come and help*," as Macedonia in the Acts;—woe be to the power that fails it! and blessed, thrice blessed from heaven be that hand that shall raise her on her

⁹ See Acts xvi. 9.

feet, and wipe off her tears, and stretch out itself mightily for her safeguard!—*Sermon xxi.*

The Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.
—Col. i. 12.

How comfortable a style is that, O God, which thine Apostle gives to thy heaven, while he calls it *The inheritance of the saints in light!* None can come there, but saints: the rooms of this lower world are taken up, commonly, with wicked men, with beasts, with devils; but, into that heavenly Jerusalem, no unholy thing can enter. Neither can any saint be excluded thence: each of them have, not only a share, but an entire right to thy glory. And how many just titles are there, O Saviour, to that region of blessedness! It is thy Father's gift: it is thy purchase: it is thy saints' inheritance; theirs only in thy right; by thy gracious adoption they are sons, and as sons,

heirs, coheirs with thee of that blessed patrimony¹; so feoffed¹ upon them, so possessed of them, that they can never be disseized². And, Lord, how glorious an inheritance it is! An inheritance in light, in light incomprehensible, in light inaccessible. Lo, the most spiritual of all thy visible creatures is light; and yet this light is but the effect and emanation of one of thy creatures, the sun, and serves only for the illumination of this visible world: but that supernal light is from the all-glorious beams of thy Divine Majesty, diffusing themselves to those blessed spirits, both angels and souls of thy saints, who live in the joyful fruition of thee to all eternity. Alas, Lord, we do here dwell in darkness, and under an uncomfortable opacity, while thy face is clouded from us with manifold temptations: there above, with thee is pure light, a constant noontide of glory: I am here under a miserable and obscure wardship. Oh, teach me to despise the best of earth; and ravish my soul with a longing desire of being possessed of that blessed *inheritance of the saints in light*.—*Breathings of the Devout Soul*, xxix.

¹ Rom. viii. 17.

² *Feoffed*, bestowed.

³ *Disseized*, dispossessed.

Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.—St. Matthew ix. 22. (*Gospel.*)

THE endeavour and issue of all, both human and spiritual things depends upon our faith. Who would commit a plant or seed to the earth, if he did not believe to have it nursed in that kindly bosom? What merchant would put himself upon the guard of an inch-board in a furious sea, if he did not trust to the faithful custody of that plank? Who would trade, or travel, or war, or marry, if he did not therein surely trust he should speed well? What benefit can we look to carry from a Divine exhortation, if we do not believe it will edify us? from a sacramental banquet, the food of angels, if we do not believe it will nourish our souls? from our best devotions, if we do not persuade ourselves they will fetch down blessings? Oh, our vain and heartless services! if we do not say, "May I drink but one drop of that heavenly nectar, may I taste but one crumb of that bread of life, may I hear but one word from the mouth of Christ, may I send up but one hearty sigh or ejaculation of a holy desire to my God, I shall be whole."

Daughter, be of good comfort ; thy faith hath made thee whole. O sweet and seasonable word, fit for those merciful and Divine lips ; able to secure any heart, to dispel any fears ! Still, O Saviour, thou doest thus to us : when we fall down before thee in an awful dejectedness, thou rearest us up with a cheerful and compassionate encouragement : when thou findest us bold and presumptuous, thou lovest to take us down ; when humbled, it is enough to have prostrated us : like as that lion of Bethel worries the disobedient prophet, guards the poor ass that stood quaking before him ; or like some mighty wind that bears over a tall elm or cedar with the same breath, that it raiseth a stooping reed ; or, like some good physician, who finding the body obstructed and surcharged with ill humours, evacuates it, and when it is sufficiently pulled down, raises it up with sovereign cordials. And still do thou so to my soul. If, at any time, thou perceivest me stiff and rebellious, ready to face out my sin against thee, spare me not ; let me smart, till I relent. But *a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not,* O Lord, do not, *despise*⁴.

Her cure was Christ's act, yet He gives the

⁴ Ps. li. 17.

praise of it to her; *Thy faith hath made thee whole*. He had said before, *Virtue is gone out of me*⁵; now He acknowledges a virtue inherent in her. It was his virtue that cured her; yet He graciously casts this work upon her faith. Not that her faith did it by way of merit, by way of efficiency, but by way of impetration. So much did our Saviour regard that faith, which He had wrought in her, that He will honour it with the success of her cure. Such, and the same, is still the remedy of our spiritual diseases, our sins. *By faith we are justified*⁶; *by faith we are saved*⁷. Thou only, O Saviour, canst heal us; thou wilt not heal us, but by our faith; not as it issues from us, but as it appropriates thee. The sickness is ours, the remedy is ours: the sickness is our own by nature; the remedy ours by thy grace, both working and accepting it. Our faith is no less from thee, than thy cure is from our faith.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 7.*

⁵ St. Luke viii. 46.⁶ Rom. v. 1.⁷ See Eph. ii. 8.

The Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.

And this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.—Jer. xxiii. 6. (*Epistle.*)

THE righteousness whereby we stand just before our God is not merely another's; it is, by application, ours: it is Christ's; and Christ is ours. He is our head; we, as members, are united to Him; and, by virtue of this blessed union, partake of his perfect obedience and satisfaction. It is true, were we strangers to a Saviour, his righteousness could have no relation to us; but, now that we are incorporated into Him, by a lively faith, his graces, his merits, are so ours, that all thy malice, O Satan, cannot sever them. I, even I, who sinned in the first Adam, have satisfied in the second. The first Adam's sin was mine: the second Adam was *made sin*⁸ for me. I made myself sinful in the first Adam; and in myself: my *Christ is made to me of God, righteousness and redemption*⁹. The curse was my inheritance: *Christ hath redeemed me from*

⁸ 2 Cor. v. 21.

⁹ 1 Cor. i. 30.

*the curse of the law, being made a curse for me*¹⁰, *that I might be made the righteousness of God in him*¹¹.—*Satan's Fiery Darts Quenched, Decade i.*

Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.—St. John vi. 14. (*Gospel.*)

THAT which is nearest to us is our nourishment. What can be more evident than that the bread, the meat, the drink that we receive, is incorporated into us, and becomes part of the substance whereof we consist? So as after perfect digestion, there can be no distinction, betwixt what we are, and what we took. While that bread was in the bin, and that meat in the shambles, and that drink in the vessel, it had no relation to us, nor we to it: yea, while all these were on the table, yea, in our mouths, yea, newly let down into our stomachs, they are not fully ours; for, upon some nauseating dislike of nature, they may yet go the same way they came. But if the concoction be once fully finished, now they are so turned into our blood and flesh, that they can be no more distinguished from our former substance,

¹⁰ Gal. iii. 13.

¹¹ 2 Cor. v. 21.

than that could be divided from itself: now they are dispersed into the veins, and concorporated to the flesh; and no part of our flesh and blood is more ours, than that which was lately the blood of the grapes, and the flesh of this fowl or that beast.

O Saviour, thou, who art Truth itself, hast said, *I am the living bread which came down from heaven. My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed*: and thereupon, hast most justly inferred, *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him*; and, as a necessary consequent of this spiritual manducation, *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life*¹.

Lo, thou art bread indeed; not the common bread, but Manna; not the Israelitish manna: alas, that fell from no higher than the region of clouds, and they that eat it died with it in their inmouths; but thou art the living Bread, that came down from the heaven of heavens, of whom whosoever eats, lives for ever. Thy flesh is meat; not for our stomachs, but for our souls: our faith receives and digests thee, and makes thee ours, and us thine.

¹ John vi. 51. 55, 56. 54.

Our material food, in these corruptible bodies, runs into corruption : thy spiritual food nourisheth purely, and strengthens us to a blessed immortality.

As for this material food, many a one longs for it that cannot get it; many a one hath it that cannot eat it: many eat it that cannot digest it; many digest it into noxious and corrupt humours: all that receive it, do but maintain a perishing life, if not a languishing death. But this flesh of thine, as it was never withheld from any true appetite, so it never yields but wholesome and comfortable sustenance to the soul; never hath any other issue, than an everlasting life and happiness.

O Saviour, whensoever I sit at mine own table, let me think of thine: whensoever I feed on the bread and meat that is set before me, and feel myself nourished by that repast, let me mind that better sustenance, which my soul receives from thee; and find thee more one with me, than that bodily food!—*Christ Mystical*, § 3.

St. Andrew's Day.

With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.—Rom. x. 10, 11. (*Epistle.*)

You are sure of God, but you are afraid of yourself. The doubt is not in his promise, but in your application. Look into your own heart. How know you, that you know any thing, that you believe, that you will, that you approve, that you affect any thing? If a man, like yourself, promise you ought, you know whether you trust him; whether you rely yourself on his fidelity. Why can you not know it in Him that is God and man? The difference is not in the act, but in the object.

But if these habits, because of their inward and ambiguous nature, seem hard to be descried, turn your eyes to those open marks, that cannot beguile you. How many have bragged of their faith, when they have embraced nothing but a vain cloud of presumption! Every man repeats his creed: few feel it; few practise it. Take two boughs in the

dead of winter ; how like is one wood to another ! how hardly discerned ! Afterwards, *by their fruits ye shall know them*². That faith, whose nature was obscure, is evident in his effects. What is faith ; but the hand of the soul ? What is the duty of the hand, but either to hold or to work ? This hand then holds Christ, works obedience and holiness.

And, if this act of apprehension be as secret as the cause ; since the closed hand hideth still what it holdeth ; see the hand of faith open : see what it worketh ; and compare it with your own proof. Deny, if you can, yet I would rather appeal to any judge than your prejudiced self, that, in all your needs, you can step boldly to the throne of heaven ; and freely pour out your enlarged heart to your God ; and crave of Him, whether to receive what you want, or that you may want ; what you have, and would not. Be assured from God, this can be done by no power, but, that you fear to miss, of faith. God, as He is not, so He is not called, a Father, without this. In vain doth he pray, that cannot call God, Father : no Father, without the Spirit of Adoption ; no Spirit, without faith : without this, you

² Mat. vii. 20.

may babble; you cannot pray. Assume you, that you can pray; I dare conclude that you believe.

As little as you love yourself, deny, if you can, that you love God. Say that your Saviour from heaven should ask you Peter's question, could your soul return any other answer than, *Lord, thou knowest that I love thee*³. Why are you else in such awe to offend, that a world cannot bribe you to sin? Why in such deep grief when you have sinned, that no mirth can refresh you? Why in such fervent desire of enjoying his presence? Why in such agony when you enjoy it not? Neither doth God love you, neither can you love God, without faith.

Yet more; do you willingly nourish any one sin in your breast? do you not repent of all? do you not hate all, though you cannot leave all? do you not complain, that you hate them no more? do you not, as for life, wish for holiness, and endeavour it? Nothing, but faith, can thus cleanse the heart: that, like a good housewife, sweeps all the foul corners of the soul; and will not leave so much as one web, in this roomy house. Trust to it, you cannot hate sin for its own sake, and

³ John xxi. 15.

forsake it, for God's sake, without faith : the faithless hath had some remorse and fears ; never, repentance.

Lastly, do you not love a good man, for goodness ; and delight in God's saints ? Doth not your love lead you to compassion ; your compassion, to relief ? A heart truly faithful cannot but have a hand christianly bountiful. Charity and faith make up one perfect pair of compasses, that can take the true latitude of a Christian heart : faith is the one foot, pitched in the centre unmoveably ; while charity walks about, in a perfect circle of beneficence ; these two never did, never can go asunder. Warrant you your love, I dare warrant your faith.

What need I say more ? This heat of your affections, and this light of your works, will evince against all the gates of hell, that you have the fire of faith. Let your soul then warm itself with these sweet and cordial flames, against all those cold despairs, whereto you are tempted : say, *Lord, I believe* ; and I will give you leave still to add, *help thou mine unbelief*⁴. — *Epistle vi. Decade iv.*

⁴ Mark ix. 24.

He saith unto them, Follow me.—St. Matthew iv. 19.
(*Gospel.*)

THOU wouldst willingly go to heaven: what better guide canst thou have than Him that dwells there? If He lead thee through deep sloughs, and braky thickets, know that He knows this the nearer way, though more cumbersome. Can there be in Him any want of wisdom not to foresee the best? Can there be any want of power, not to effect the best? any want of love, not to give thee what He knows is best? How canst thou then fail of the best, since what his power can do, and what his wisdom sees should be done, his love hath done, because all are infinite? He willeth not things, because they are good; but they are good, because He wills them. Yea, if ought had been better, this had not been. God willeth what He doth: and, if thy will accord not with his, whether wilt thou condemn of imperfection?—*Heaven upon Earth*, § 26.

St. Thomas the Apostle.

Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.—
Eph. ii. 20. (*Epistle.*)

WHAT is a Christian, but a living stone, laid upon the foundation of God's spiritual building? And this foundation is either personal or doctrinal. The personal is Christ, the Son of the ever-living God; so the great and wise master-builder tells us: *Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*⁵. The doctrinal is the whole truth of God revealed in the Holy Scriptures,—*the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*: every line of whose divine writings is, in respect of the authority of the revealer, a several stone in this precious foundation; though, in respect of use, those only truths, thence selected, without whose express and explicit knowledge no man can be saved, are justly styled fundamental.—*The Peacemaker*, § 3.

⁵ 1 Cor. iii. 11.

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord.—St. John xx. 25. (*Gospel.*)

How easily could I be drawn to envy the privilege of those eyes which saw thee here walking upon earth, O God and Saviour, in the days of thy manifesting thyself in flesh! Oh, what a happy spectacle was this, to see the face of Him in whom the Godhead dwelt bodily! All the world is not worth such a sight. Whither could I not wish to go, to see but a just portraiture of that shape, wherein thou wert pleased to converse with men?

But thy holy Apostle checks this useless curiosity in me, while he says, *Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more*⁶. It is not the outside of thy human form, the view whereof can make us more holy or more happy. Judas saw thee, as well as he that lay on thy bosom; those saw thee that maligned and persecuted thee, and that shall once again see thee to their utmost horror;—see Him, whom they pierced. They saw that flesh in which God was manifested: they saw not *God manifest in the flesh*⁷. It is our great comfort

⁶ 2 Cor. v. 16.

⁷ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

and privilege, that it was flesh, wherein God was manifested ; but it is not in the flesh, but in the Deity, to render us blessed.

O Saviour, I dare not beg of thee, so to manifest thyself to me, as thou didst to thy chosen vessel, in his way to Damascus ; or to thy first martyr, in the storm of his lapidation : these miraculous manifestations are not for my meanness to sue for. But, let me never cease to crave of thee a double manifestation of thyself to me : be pleased to manifest thyself to me in the clear illuminations of thy Spirit ; let me, by the eyes of my faith, clearly see thee both sprawling in the manger, and walking upon earth, and tempted in the wilderness, and arraigned in the judgment-hall, and suffering upon Calvary, and rising out of thy tomb, and ascending from thy Olivet, and reigning in heaven, and there interceding for me : and, after my approaching dissolution, let my soul see thee in that glorified flesh, wherein thou wert manifested to the world ; and in the majesty of that all-glorious Deity, which assumed it to that ever blessed society of glory.—*Great Mystery of Godliness*, § 5.

And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.—St. John xx. 28. (*Gospel.*)

SURELY the whole Church of God hath reason to bless God for Thomas's unbelief; not in the act, which was odious, after so good assurances, but in the issue. His doubt proves our evidence; and his confession, after his touch had convinced him, was more noble than his incredulity was shameful. All his attendance upon Christ had not taught him so much divinity as this one touch. Often had he said, *My Lord*; but never *My God* till now. Even Peter's confession, though rewarded with the change of his name, came short of this. The flame that is beaten down by the blast of the bellows rises higher than otherwise it would; and the spring water that runs level in the plain, yea if it fall low, it will therefore rise high; the shaken tree roots the deeper. Not that we should *sin that grace may abound; God forbid*^a; he can never hope to be good, that will be therefore ill that he may be the better; but that our holy zeal should labour to improve our miscarriages to our spiritual gain; and the greater glory of that majesty whom we have offended.

^a Rom. vi. 1, 2.

To be bettered by grace, it is no mastery ; but to raise more holiness out of sin, is a noble imitation of that holy God, who brings light out of darkness, life out of death.—*Select Thoughts*, xxxix.

The Conversion of St. Paul.

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way : for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.—Acts ix. 15. (*Epistle.*)

How did we, O Saviour, of old lie under the pity and contempt of those thy people, which challenged a peculiarity of thy favour! *We have a little sister*, said thy Jewish Spouse, *and she hath no breasts ; what shall we do for our sister, in the day when she shall be spoken for*⁹? Take no thought for us, O thou once beloved Synagogue of the Jews : thy little sister is not only spoken for, but contracted ; but happily married to her Lord and Saviour ; having been *betrothed*

⁹ Cant. viii. 8.

to Him *for ever, in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies*¹: so as we can now return our pity to thee and say "We had an elder sister, which had breasts; but her breasts are long since wrinkled and dried up: what shall we do for our sister in these days of her barrenness, and just neglect? We shall surely pray for our sister, that God would be pleased to return to her in his compassion of old; and restore her to the happy state of her former fruitfulness." We follow them with our prayers; they us, with malice and despite. With how envious eyes did they look upon those first heralds of the Gospel, who carried the glad tidings of salvation to the despised Gentiles! What cruel storms of persecution did they raise against those blessed messengers, whose feet deserved to be beautiful! wherein, their obstinate unbelief turned to our advantage: for, after they had made themselves unworthy of that Gospel of peace, that blessing was instantly derived upon us Gentiles, and we happily changed conditions with them. The natural branches of the good olive tree being cut off, we, that were of the wild olive, contrary to nature, are grafted in. O the

¹ Hosea ii. 19.

*goodness and severity of God : on them which fell, severity ; on us which succeeded, goodness*². They were once the children ; and we, the dogs under the table : the crumbs were our lot, the bread was theirs. Now is the case, through their wilful incredulity, altered ; they are the dogs, and we the children : we sit at a full table, while their hunger is not satisfied with scraps. *The casting away of them was the reconciling of the world*³ : their fall our exaltation. It is not for us to be *highminded, but to fear*⁴.—*Great Mystery of Godliness, § 11.*

But many that are first shall be last ; and the last shall be first.—St. Matthew xix. 30. (*Gospel.*)

THINK not of a ladder to climb up into heaven, to search into the books of God.

First, look into your own lives. Those are most open ; we need no locks or keys to them. The Psalmist, in his fifteenth, will tell you who is for that blissful Sion : are your lives innocent ; are your works good and holy ; do ye abound in the fruits of piety, justice, Christian compassion ? Let these be your first trial. It is a flat and

² See Rom. xi. 17. 22.

³ Rom. xi. 15.

⁴ Rom. xi. 20.

plain word of the divine Apostle: *Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God* ⁵.

Look, secondly, into your own bosoms,—open to none but your own eyes. If ye find there a true and lively faith in the Son of God; by whose blood ye are cleansed from all your sins; by virtue whereof ye can cry, *Abba, Father* ⁶: a sure hope in Christ, purifying your souls from your corruptions; a true and unfeigned love to your God and Saviour, who hath done so much for your souls; so as you dare say, with that fervent Apostle, *Lord, thou knowest that I love thee* ⁷: and, in Him, and for his sake, a sincere love to his children, as such; not as men, not as witty, wise, noble, rich, bountiful, useful, but as Christians; shewing itself in all real expressions: these, these are excellent and irrefragable proofs and evictions of your calling and election. Seek for these in your hearts and hands; and seek for them till ye find them; and, when ye have found them, make much of them as the invaluable favours of God, and labour for a continual increase of them, and a growth in this heavenly assurance by them.

⁵ 1 John iii. 10.

⁶ Gal. iv. 6.

⁷ John xxi. 16.

What need I urge any Motives, to stir up your Christian care and diligence? Do but look, first, behind you. See but how much precious time we have already lost; how we have loitered hitherto in our great work. Bernard's question is fit still to be asked by us of our souls; *Bernarde, ad quid venisti?* Wherefore are we here upon earth? To pamper our bodies? To wallow in all voluptuous courses? To scrape up the pelf of the world; as if the only end of our being were carnal pleasure, worldly profit? O base and unworthy thoughts! What do we with reason, if we be thus prostituted? It is for beasts, which have no souls, to be all for sense. For us that have ratiocination and pretend grace, we know we are here but in a thoroughfare to another world, and all the main task we have to do here in this life is, to provide for a better. Oh, then, let us recollect ourselves at the last, and redeem the time; and, overlooking this vain and worthless world, bend all our best endeavours to make sure work for eternity.

Look, secondly, before you; and see the shortness and uncertainty of this which we call a life. What day is there that may not be our last? What hour is there that we can make account of as certain? And think how many worlds the

dying man would give, in the late conscience of a careless life, for but one day more to do his neglected work ; and shall we wilfully be prodigal of this happy leisure and liberty, and knowingly hazard so woeful and irremediable a surprisal ?

Look, thirdly, below you ; and see the horror of that dreadful place of torment, which is the unavoidable portion of careless and unreclaimable sinners ; consider the extremity, the eternity of those tortures ; which, in vain, the secure heart slightly hoped to avoid.

Look, lastly, above you ; and see whether that heaven, whose outside we behold, be not worthy of our utmost ambition, of our most zealous and effectual endeavours. Do we not think there is pleasure and happiness enough in that region of glory and blessedness, to make abundant amends for all our self-combats ; for all our tasks of dutiful service ; for all our painful exercises of mortification ? Oh, then, let us earnestly and unweariedly aspire thither ; and think all the time lost, that we employ not in the endeavour of making sure of that blessed and eternal inheritance. To the full possession whereof He, that hath purchased it for us by his most precious blood, in his good time, happily bring us. Amen.

—*Sermon xlii.*

THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE
TEMPLE, COMMONLY CALLED

The Purification of St. Mary the Virgin.

And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.—Malachi iii. 1. (*Epistle.*)

How glorious did the Temple seem, now that the Owner was within the walls of it! Now was the hour and guest come, in regard whereof the Second Temple should surpass the First. This was his house, built for Him, dedicated to Him: there had He dwelt long in his spiritual presence, in his typical. There was nothing either placed or done within those walls, whereby He was not resembled; and now the body of those shadows is come, and presents Himself where He had been ever represented. Jerusalem is now every where. There is no Church, no Christian heart, which is not a temple of the living God. There is no temple of God wherein Christ is not presented to his Father. Look upon Him, O God, in whom

thou art well pleased ; and in Him, and for Him be well pleased with us.

Under the Gospel we are all first-born, all heirs ; every soul is to be holy unto the Lord ; we are a royal generation, a holy priesthood. Our baptism, as it is our circumcision and our sacrifice of purification, so is it also our presentation unto God. Nothing can become us, but holiness. O God, to whom we are devoted, serve thyself of us, glorify thyself by us, till we shall by thee be glorified with thee.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book i. Con. 5.*

And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord.—St. Luke ii. 22. (*Gospel.*)

HE that came to be sin for us, would in our persons be legally unclean ; that, by satisfying the law, He might take away our uncleanness. Though He were exempted from the common condition of our birth, yet He would not deliver Himself from those ordinary rites that implied the weakness and blemishes of humanity. He would fulfil one law to abrogate it ; another, to satisfy it. He that was above the law, would come under the law, to free us from the law.

Not a day would be changed, either in the circumcision of Christ, or the purification of Mary.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book i. Con. 5.*

No sooner is the Blessed Virgin either able or allowed to walk, than she travels to Jerusalem ; to perform her holy rites for herself, for her Son ; to purify herself, to present her Son. She goes not to her own house at Nazareth ; she goes to God's house at Jerusalem. If purifying were a shadow, yet thanksgiving is a substance. Those whom God hath blessed with fruit of body and safety of deliverance, if they make not their first journey to the temple of God, they partake more of the unthankfulness of Eve than Mary's devotion.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book i. Con. 5.*

Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word : for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.—St. Luke ii. 28—30. (*Gospel.*)

I CANNOT but think with what unspeakable joy old Simeon died, when, after long waiting for the consolation of Israel, he had now seen the Lord's Christ ; when I hear him say, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy*

*word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. Methinks I should see his soul ready to fly out of his mouth in a heavenly ravishment; and, even then, upon its wing towards its glory, for now his eyes saw, and his arms embraced, in God's salvation his own, in Israel's glory his own. How gladly doth he now see death, when he hath the Lord of Life in his bosom! O how can he wish to close up his eyes with any other object? Yet, when I have seriously considered it, I cannot see wherein our condition comes short of his. He saw the child Jesus but in his swathing bands, when He was but now entering upon the great work of our redemption: we see Him, after the full accomplishment of it, gloriously triumphing in heaven. He saw Him but buckling on his armour, and entering into the lists: we see Him victorious; *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save*⁸. He could only say, *Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given*⁹; we can say, *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for**

⁸ Isa. lxiii. 1.⁹ Isa. ix. 6.

men¹⁰. It is true, the difference is, he saw his Saviour with bodily eyes; we with mental: but the eyes of our faith are no less sure and unfailing than those of sense. Lord, why should not I, whose eyes have no less seen thy salvation, say, Now let thy servant depart, not in peace only, but in a joyful sense of my instant glory?—*Select Thoughts*, xxxvi.

St. Matthias's Day.

This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.—Acts i. 16, 17. (*Epistle.*)

THERE are none that ever did so much mischief to the Church as those that have been excellent in wit and learning. Others may be spiteful enough; but they want power to accomplish their malice. An enemy that hath both strength and craft is worthy to be feared. None can sin against the Holy Ghost as those which have had

¹⁰ Ps. lxxviii. 18.

former illumination. Tell not me what parts a man hath, but what grace: honest sottishness is better than profane eminence.—*Holy Observations*, lxvii.

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.—St. Matthew xi. 25. (*Gospel.*)

A FAITHFUL man hath three eyes: the first, of Sense, common to him with brute creatures; the second, of Reason, common to all men; the third, of Faith, proper to his profession: whereof each looketh beyond other; and none of them meddleth with others' objects. For, neither doth the eye of Sense reach to intelligible things, and matters of discourse; nor the eye of Reason to those things which are supernatural and spiritual; neither doth Faith look down to things that may be sensibly seen. If thou discourse to a brute beast of the depths of philosophy, never so plainly, he understands not, because they are beyond the view of his eye, which is only of sense: if to a mere carnal man, of divine things, he perceiveth not the things of God, neither indeed can do, because they are spiritually discerned; and, therefore, no wonder, if those things seem unlikely, incredible, impossible to him, which the

faithful man, having a proportionable means of apprehension, doth as plainly see, as his eye doth any sensible thing. Tell a plain countryman, that the sun, or some higher or lesser star, is much bigger than his cart-wheel; or, at least so many scores bigger than the whole earth; he laughs thee to scorn, as affecting admiration with a learned untruth. Yet the scholar, by the eye of reason, doth as plainly see and acknowledge this truth, as that his hand is bigger than his pen.

What a thick mist, yea, what a palpable and more than Egyptian darkness, doth the natural man live in! What a world is there that he doth not see at all! and how little doth he see in this which is his proper element! There is no bodily thing, but the brute creatures see as well as he; and some of them better. As for his eye of reason, how dim is it in those things which are best fitted to it! What one thing is there in nature, which he doth perfectly know? What herb, or flower, or worm that he treads on, is there, whose true essence he knoweth? No, not so much as what is in his own bosom; what it is, where it is, or whence it is, that gives being to himself. But, for those things which concern the best world, he doth not so much as confusedly see them; neither knoweth whether they be. He

sees no whit into the great and awful majesty of God. He discerns Him not in all his creatures, filling the world with his infinite and glorious presence. He sees not his wise providence overruling all things, disposing all casual events, ordering all sinful actions of men to his own glory. He comprehends nothing of the beauty, majesty, power, and mercy of the Saviour of the world, sitting in his humanity at his Father's right hand. He sees not the unspeakable happiness of the glorified souls of the saints. He sees not the whole heavenly commonwealth of angels, ascending and descending to the behoof of God's children; waiting upon them at all times invisibly, not excluded with closeness of prisons, nor desolateness of wildernesses. He sees not the multitude of evil spirits, passing and standing by him, to tempt him unto evil. But, like unto the foolish bird, when he hath hid his head, that he sees nobody, he thinks himself altogether unseen; and then counts himself solitary, when his eye can meet with no companion.

It was not without cause that we call a mere fool a natural; for however worldlings have still thought Christians God's fools, we know them the fools of the world. The deepest philosopher that ever was, saving the reverence of the schools,

is but an ignorant sot, to the simplest Christian: for, the weakest Christian may, by plain information, see somewhat into the greatest mysteries of nature, because he hath the eye of reason common with the best; but the best philosopher, by all the demonstration in the world, can conceive nothing of the mysteries of godliness, because he utterly wants the eye of faith. Though my insight into matters of the world be so shallow, that my simplicity moveth pity, or maketh sport unto others; it shall be my contentment and happiness, that I see further into better matters. That which I see not is worthless; and deserves little better than contempt: that, which I see, is unspeakable, inestimable, for comfort, for glory. — *Meditations and Vows*, lxxxii. Cent. 2.

The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son.—Isaiah vii. 14. (*Epistle*.)

O God, why do we seek a clear light where thou wilt have a shadow? What presumption shall it be for flesh and blood, to search how the

Son of God took flesh and blood of his creature ! It is for none, but the Almighty, to know those works which He doth, immediately concerning Himself; those, that concern us, He hath revealed :—secrets to God; things revealed to us. —*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book i. Con. 2.*

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.—St. Luke i. 28. (*Gospel.*)

THE angel salutes the virgin, he prays not to her. He salutes her as a saint; he prays not to her as a goddess. For us to salute her as he did, were gross presumption; for neither are we as he was, neither is she as she was. If he, that was a spirit, saluted her that was flesh and blood here on earth, it is not for us that are flesh and blood to salute her, which is a glorious spirit in heaven. For us to pray to her in the angel's salutation, were to abuse the virgin, the angel, the salutation.

But how gladly do we second the angel in the praise of her, which was more ours than his! How justly do we bless her, whom the angel pronounceth blessed! How worthily is she honoured of men, whom the angel proclaimeth beloved of God! O blessed Mary, he cannot bless

thee, he cannot honour thee too much, that deifies thee not. That, which the angel said of thee, thou hast prophesied of thyself: we believe the angel and thee. All generations shall call thee blessed, by the fruit of whose womb all generations are blessed.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book i. Con. 2.*

And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.—St. Luke i. 38. (*Gospel.*)

THE answer was not so full but that a thousand difficulties might arise, out of the particularities of so strange a message; yet, after the angel's solution, we hear of no more objections, no more interrogations. The faithful heart, when it once understands the good pleasure of God, argues no more; but sweetly rests itself in a quiet expectation. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.* There is not a more noble proof of our faith, than to captivate all the powers of our understanding and will to our Creator; and, without all sciscitations¹, to go blindfold whither He will lead us. All disputations with God, after his will known, arise from infidelity. *Great is the mystery of godliness*²;

¹ *Sciscitations*, questionings.

² 1 Tim. iii. 16.

and, if we will give nature leave to cavil, we cannot be Christians. O God, thou art faithful, thou art powerful. It is enough that thou hast said it. In the humility of our obedience, we resign ourselves over to thee. Behold the servants of the Lord ; be it unto us according to thy word.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book i. Con. 2.*

That we henceforth be no more children.—Eph. iv. 14.
(*Epistle.*)

As it shall be once in glory, so it is in grace : there are degrees of it. The Apostle that said of his auditors, they have received the Holy Ghost as well as we, did not say, they have received the Holy Ghost as much as we. We know the Apostles had so much, as to give it to others : none, besides them, could do so. It is a happy thing to have any quantity of true sanctifying grace at all : every drop of water is water, and every grain of gold is gold ; every measure of grace is precious. But, who is there that, when he is thirsty, would take up with one drop of liquor, when he might have more ? or, if covetously minded, would sit down content with one dram of gold ? in such cases, a little doth but draw on a desire of more. It is strange to see, that,

in all other commodities, we desire a fulness : if God give us fruit of our bodies, it contents us not to have an imperfect child, but we wish it may have the full shape and proportion ; and, when God hath answered us in that, we do not rest in the integrity of parts, but desire that it may attain to a fulness of understanding and stature ; and then, lastly, to a fulness of age. We would have full dishes, full cups, full coffers, full barns, a fulness of all things ; save the best of all, which is, the Holy Ghost. Any measure of spiritual grace contents us ; so as we are ready to say with Esau, *I have enough, my brother*³. There is a sinful kind of contentation, wherewith many fashionable Christians suffer themselves to be beguiled, to the utter undoing of their souls : for, hereupon they grow utterly careless to get what they think they have already. And, by this means, they live and die graceless : for, had they ever tasted how sweet the Lord is in the graces of his Holy Spirit, they could never think they had enough ; and, while they do think so, they are utterly incapable of either having or desiring more. As there is a sinful, so there is a holy covetousness ; which, the more it hath, the more

³ Gen. xxxiii. 9.

it affects. Lord, make me thus covetous, and I cannot but be rich.—*Select Thoughts*, xlii.

I am the vine, ye are the branches.—St. John xv. 5. (*Gospel*.)

Look but into thy garden or orchard, and see the vine, or any other fruit-bearing tree, how it grows and fructifies ! The branches are laden with increase : whence is this, but that they are one with the stock ; and the stock one with the root ? Were either of these severed, the plant were barren and dead. The branch hath not sap enough to maintain life in itself, unless it receive it from the body of the tree ; nor that, unless it derived it from the root ; nor that, unless it were cherished by the earth.

Lo ; *I am the vine*, saith our Saviour, *ye are the branches*. *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit*. *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered*⁴. Were the branch and the body of the tree of different substances, and only closed together in some artificial contiguity, no fruit could be expected from it : it is only the abiding in the tree as a living limb of that plant, which yields it the benefit and issue of vegetation. No

⁴ John xv. 5, 6.

otherwise is it betwixt Christ and his Church : the bough and the tree are not more of one piece, than we are of one substance with our Saviour ; and branching out from Him, and receiving the sap of heavenly virtue from his precious root, we cannot but be acceptably fruitful.

But, if the analogy seem not to be so full ; for that the branch issues naturally from the tree, and the fruit from the branch, whereas we by nature have no part in the Son of God ; take that clearer resemblance, which the Apostle fetches from the stock and the graff, or scion. The branches of the wild olive^s are cut off, and are grafted with choice scions of the good olive. Those imps grow ; and are now, by this incision, no less embodied in that stock, than if they had sprouted out by a natural propagation ; neither can be any more separated from it, than the strongest bough that nature puts forth. In the mean time, that scion alters the nature of that stock ; and, while the root gives fatness to the stock, and the stock yields juice to the scion, the scion gives goodness to the plant, and a specification to the fruit : so as, while the imp is now the same thing with the stock, the tree is different from what it was.

So it is betwixt Christ and the believing soul.

^s Rom. xi. 17.

Old Adam is our wild stock: what could that have yielded, but either none, or sour fruit? We are impeded with the new man, Christ, that is now incorporated into us. We are become one with Him. Our nature is not more ours, than He is ours by grace. Now we bear his fruit, and not our own: our old stock is forgotten: all things are become new. Our natural life we receive from Adam; our spiritual life and growth from Christ: from whom, after the improvement of this blessed incision, we can be no more severed, than He can be severed from Himself.—*Christ Mystical*, § 4.

St. Philip and St. James's Day.

Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: but the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.—St. James i. 9, 10. (*Epistle.*)

WHEN I see a rich man hugging his bags and admiring his wealth, I look upon that man with pity; as knowing the poorness of that self wherein he placeth his felicity: neither can I behold him with other eyes than those wherewith a discreet European sees a savage Indian priding himself in those trifles, which our children have learned to contemn. On the other side, when I

see a man rich in the endowments of mind, well fraught with knowledge, eminent in goodness, and truly gracious, I shall rise up to that man, how homely soever his outside be, as the most precious and excellent piece which this world can afford.—*Select Thoughts*, xvii.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.—St. John xiv. 1. (*Gospel*.)

WOULDST thou, my son, find true and solid comfort in the hour of temptation, in the agony of death? make sure work for thy soul in the days of thy peace. Find Christ thine: and, in the despite of hell, thou art both safe and blessed.

Look not so much to an absolute Deity, infinitely and incomprehensibly glorious; alas, that Majesty, because perfectly and essentially good, is, out of Christ, no other than an enemy to thee. Thy sin hath offended his justice, which is Himself: what hast thou to do with that dreadful power which thou hast provoked?

Look to that merciful and all-sufficient *Mediator between God and men*⁶; who is both God and man, *Jesus Christ the righteous*⁷. It is his

⁶ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

⁷ 1 John ii. 1.

charge, and our duty, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

Yet look not merely to the Lord Jesus as considered in the notion of his own eternal being, as the Son of God, coequal and coessential to God the Father; but look upon Him as He stands in reference to the sons of men. And, herein also, look not to Him so much as a Lawgiver and a Judge: there is terror in such apprehension: but look upon Him as a gracious Saviour and Advocate. And, lastly, look not upon Him as, in the generality of his mercy, the common Saviour of mankind: what comfort were it to thee, that all the world except thyself were saved? but look upon Him as the dear Redeemer of thy soul, as thine Advocate at the right hand of Majesty; as one with whom thou art, through his wonderful mercy, inseparably united.

Thus look upon Him, firmly and fixedly, so as He may never be out of thine eyes: and whatever secular objects interpose themselves betwixt thee and Him, look through them as some slight mists, and terminate thy sight still in this blessed prospect. Let neither earth nor heaven hide them from thee, in whatsoever condition.—*Christ Mystical, Chap. i. § 1.*

St. Barnabas the Apostle.

He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.—Acts xi. 24. (*Epistle.*)

THE faithful man's eyes have no other objects but absent and invisible, which they see so clearly, as that to them sense is blind: that which is present they see not; if I may not rather say that which is past or future is present to them. Herein he exceeds all others, that to him nothing is impossible, nothing difficult, whether to bear or undertake. He walks every day with his Maker; and talks with Him familiarly; and lives ever in heaven; and sees all earthly things beneath him. When he goes in to converse with God, he wears not his own clothes, but takes them still out of the rich wardrobe of his Redeemer, and then dare boldly press in and challenge a blessing. The celestial spirits do not scorn his company, yea his service. He deals in these worldly affairs as a stranger, and hath his heart ever at home. Without a written warrant he dare do nothing, and, with it, any thing. His war is perpetual; without truce, without intermission: and his victory certain: he meets with the infernal powers, and tramples them under feet:

the shield that he ever bears before him can neither be missed nor pierced: if his hand be wounded, yet his heart is safe; he is often tripped, seldom foiled; and, if sometimes foiled, never vanquished. He hath white hands, and a clean soul, fit to lodge God in: all the rooms whereof are set apart for his holiness. Iniquity hath oft called at the door, and craved entertainment; but, with a repulse: or, if sin, of force, will be his tenant; his lord, he cannot. His faults are few; and those he hath, God will not see. He is allied so high, that he dares call God, Father; his Saviour, brother; heaven, his patrimony; and thinks it no presumption to trust to the attendance of angels. His understanding is enlightened with the beams of divine truth; God hath acquainted him with his will, and, what he knows, he dares confess: there is not more love in his heart than liberty in his tongue. If torments stand betwixt him and Christ, if death, he contemns them; and, if his own parents lie in his way to God, his holy carelessness makes them his footsteps. His experiments have drawn forth rules of confidence, which he dares oppose against all the fears of distrust; wherein he thinks it safe to charge God with what he hath done, with what he hath promised. Examples

are his proofs, and instances his demonstrations : what hath God given, which He cannot give ? what have others suffered, which he may not be enabled to endure ? is he threatened banishment ? there he sees the dear Evangelist in Patmos : cutting in pieces ? he sees Isaiah under the saw ; drowning ? he sees Jonas diving into the living gulf : burning ? he sees the three children in the hot walk of the furnace : devouring ? he sees Daniel in the sealed den, amidst his terrible companions : stoning ? he sees the first Martyr, under his heap of many grave-stones : beheading ? lo, there the Baptist's neck, bleeding in Herodias' platter : he emulates their pain, their strength, their glory. He wearies not himself with cares ; for he knows he lives not of his own cost ; not idly omitting means, but not using them with diffidence. In the midst of ill rumours and arrangements, his countenance changeth not ; for he knows both whom he hath trusted, and whither death can lead him. He is not so sure that he shall die as that he shall be restored ; and out-faceth his death with his resurrection. Finally, he is rich in works ; busy in obedience ; cheerful and unmoved in expectation ; better with evils ; in common opinion, miserable ; but, in true judgment, more than a man.—*Characters of Virtues.*

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.—St. John xv. 15. (*Gospel.*)

MEN make difference betwixt servants, friends, and sons. Servants, though near us in place, yet, for their inferiority, are not familiar. Friends, though by reason of their equality, and our love, they are familiar, yet still we conceive of them as others from ourselves. But children we think of affectionately, as the divided pieces of our own bodies. But all these are one to God: his servants are his friends; his friends are his sons; his sons, his servants. Many claim kindred of God, and profess friendship to Him, because there are privileges without difficulty, and not without honour: all the trial is in service: the other are most in affection, and therefore secret, and so may be dissembled; this, consisting in action, must needs shew itself to the eyes of others. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*: friendship with God is in service, and this service is in action. Many wear God's cloth, that know not their Master; that never did good cheer in his service; so that God hath many retainers, that wear his livery, for a countenance;

never wait on Him; whom He will never own for servants, either by favour, or wages. Few servants, and therefore few sons. It is a great favour in God, and great honour to me, that He will vouchsafe to make me the lowest drudge in his family; which place if I had not, and were a monarch of men, I were accursed. I desire no more, but to serve: yet, Lord, thou givest me more, to be thy son. I hear David say, *Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son in law*^a? What is it then, oh what is it, to be the true adopted son of the King of Glory!—*Meditations and Vows*, xxi. Cent. 3.

St. John Baptist's Day.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.—Isaiah xl. 3. (*Epistle*.)

JOHN Baptist was the Janus of both Testaments. He was to the churches as Noah was to the worlds; he saw both the first and the latter. It is a great word that our Saviour saith of him,—That amongst those which were born of

^a 1 Sam. xviii. 23.

women there did not a greater than he arise ; but it is a greater word that he speaks of the children of the New Testament,—that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he⁹. John was so great, because he was the last of the Law, and the first of the Gospel. Therefore is the least in the Kingdom of Grace greater than he, because he is all, what John was half ; wholly under that Gospel of the kingdom which is able to advance him to a greater perfection than that harbinger of Christ.

What a favour then is it that God hath reserved us to these better days of his Gospel ; wherein the helps of salvation are more clear, obvious, effectual ; wherein, as the glory of the latter house exceeded the former, so the means of that incomprehensible glory of the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, lie more open unto us ! What should we do but both gladly use and sweetly enjoy this unspeakable blessing, which God hath kept in store for us, and walk worthy of so incomparable a mercy ? The old Jews lived in the dawning of the day ; wherein they had but a glimmering of that sun which would rise : we live after the high noon of that

⁹ See Mat. xi. 11.

happy day. If we walk not answerable to so great a light, what can we look for, but utter darkness?—*Sermon xi.*

Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest.—
St. Luke i. 76. (*Gospel.*)

ON the unjust and fond partiality of this people! They all generally applaud John for a prophet, yet they receive not his message. Whose prophet was John, but of the Highest? What was his errand, but to be the waymaker unto Christ? What was he, but the voice of that eternal Word of his Father? What was the sound of that Voice, but, *Behold the Lamb of God*¹. *He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose*². Yet they honour the servant, and reject the Master: they condemn that Prince, whose ambassador they reverence. How could they but argue, "John is a prophet: he speaks from God; his words must be true; he tells us this is the Lamb of God, the Messiah that should come to redeem the world: this must then needs be He, we will look for no other? Yet this perverse people receives John and rejects Jesus. There is ever an

¹ John i. 29.

² John i. 27.

absurdity in unbelief, while it separates those relations and respects, which can never in nature be disjoined. Thus it readily apprehends God as merciful in pardoning, not as just in punishing; Christ as a Saviour, not as a Judge.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iv. Con. 4.*

St. Peter's Day.

And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.—Acts xii. 11. (*Epistle.*)

EVEN while we see you not, O ye blessed spirits, we know what ye do. He that made you hath told us your task. As there are many millions of you, attending the all-glorious throne of your Creator, and singing perpetual Hallelujahs to Him in the highest heavens, so there are innumerable numbers of you employed, in governing and ordering the creature,—in guarding the elect,—in executing the commands which ye receive from the Almighty.

What variety is here of your assistance! One

while, ye lead us in our way, as ye did Israel ; another while, ye instruct us, as ye did Daniel : one while, ye fight for us, as ye did for Joshua ; another while, ye purvey for us, as for Elijah : one while, ye fit us to our holy vocation, as ye did to Isaiah ; another while, ye dispose of the opportunities of our calling for good, as ye did of Philip's to the Eunuch : one while, ye foretel our danger, as to Lot, to Joseph and Mary ; another while, ye comfort our affliction, as to Hagar : one while, ye oppose evil projects against us, as to Balaam ; another while, ye will be striven with for a blessing, as with Jacob : one while, ye resist our offensive courses, as to Moses (Exod. iv.) ; another while, ye encourage us in our devotions, as ye did Paul and Silas, and Cornelius : one while, ye deliver from durance, as Peter ; another while, ye preserve us from danger and death, as the Three Children : one while, ye are ready to restrain our presumption, as the cherub before the gate of paradise ; another while, to excite our courage, as to Elijah and Theodosius : one while to refresh and cheer us in our sufferings, as to the Apostles ; another while, to prevent our sufferings, as to Jacob in the pursuit of Laban and Esau, to the Sages in the pursuit of Herod one while, ye cure our bodies, as at the

pool of Bethesda; another while, ye carry up our souls to glory, as ye did to Lazarus. It were endless to instance in all the gracious offices, which ye perform.—*The Invisible World, Book i.*

The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.—St. Matthew xvi. 18. (*Gospel.*)

WE are here in a perpetual warfare, and fight we must: surely, either fight or die. Some there are that do both: that is according as the quarrel is, and is managed. There are those that fight against God: these meddling with so unequal a match cannot look to prevail. Again, the flesh warreth against the Spirit: this intestine rebellion cannot hope to prosper. But if, with the chosen vessel, I can say, *I have fought a good fight*³, I can neither lose life, nor miss of victory. And what is that good fight? Even the same Apostle tells me, *the fight of faith*⁴. This is the good fight indeed; both in the cause, and managing, and the issue. Lo, this faith it is, that wins God to my side; that makes the Almighty mine; that not only engages Him in my cause, but unites me to Him, so as his strength is mine.

³ 2 Tim. iv. 7.

⁴ 1 Tim. vi. 12.

*In the power of his might*⁵, therefore, I cannot but be victorious over all my spiritual enemies, by the only means of this faith. For, Satan, this shield of faith it is, that shall *quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*⁶. For the world; *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*⁷. Be sure to find thyself furnished with this grace; and then say "O my soul, thou hast marched valiantly: the powers of hell shall not be able to stand before thee: they are mighty, and have all advantages of a spiritual nature, of long duration, and experience, of place, of subtlety; yet this conquering grace of faith is able to give them the foil, and to trample over all the powers of darkness. O my Lord God, do thou arm and fortify my soul, with a lively and stedfast faith in thee; I shall not fear what man nor devil can do unto me; settle my heart in a firm reliance upon thee, and turn me loose to what enemy thou pleasest."—*Soliloquies*, xlii.

⁵ Eph. vi. 10.

⁶ Eph. vi. 16.

⁷ 1 John v. 4.

St. James the Apostle.

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also.—Acts xii. 1—3. (*Epistle.*)

To see how the martyrs of God died, and the life of their persecutors, would make a man out of love with life and out of all fear of death. They were flesh and blood, as well as we: life was as sweet to them as to us: their bodies were as sensible of pain as ours: we go to the same heaven with them. How comes it then that they were so courageous, in abiding such torments in their death, as the very mention strikes horror into any reader; and we are so cowardly, in encountering a fair and natural death? If this valour had been of themselves, I would never have looked after them in hope of imitation: now, I know it was He, for whom they suffered, and that suffered in them, who sustained them. They were of themselves as weak as I; and God can be as strong in me, as He was in them. O Lord, thou art not more unable to give me this grace; but I am more unworthy to re-

ceive it: and yet thou regardest not worthiness, but mercy. Give me their strength, and what end thou wilt.—*Meditations and Vows*, iii. *Cent.* 3.

Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou?—St. Matthew xx. 20, 21. (*Gospel.*)

SAY then, thou wife of Zebedee, what is it, that thou cravest of thine omnipotent kinsman? *A certain thing.* Speak out, woman; what is this certain thing, that thou cravest? How poor and weak is this supplicatory anticipation to Him that knew thy thoughts ere thou utteredst them, ere thou entertainedst them! We are all in this tune; every one would have something; such, perhaps, as we are ashamed to utter. The proud man would have a certain thing,—honour in the world; the covetous would have a certain thing too,—wealth and abundance; the malicious would have a certain thing,—revenge on his enemies; the epicure would have pleasure and long life; the barren, children; the wanton, beauty. Each one would be humoured in his own desire; though in variety, yea, contradiction to other; though in opposition, not more to God's will, than our own good.

Our Saviour had said that his twelve followers should sit upon twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. This good woman would have her two sons next to his person; the prime peers of his kingdom. Every one is apt to wish the best to his own. Worldly honour is neither worth our suit, nor unworthy our acceptance. Yea, Salome, had thy mind been in heaven, hadst thou intended this desired pre-eminence of that celestial state of glory, yet I know not how to justify thine ambition. Wouldst thou have thy sons preferred to the father of the faithful^a, to the blessed mother of thy Saviour? That very wish were presumptuous. For me, O God, my ambition shall go so high as to be a saint in heaven, and to live as holily on earth as the best; but for precedency of heavenly honour, I do not, I dare not, affect it. It is enough for me, if I may lift up my head amongst the heels of thy blessed ones.

As faith is the ground of our prayers, so knowledge is the ground of our faith. If we come with indigested requests, we profane that name we invoke.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament*, Book iv. Con. 21.

^a See Rom. iv. 11.

St. Bartholomew the Apostle.

By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people.—Acts v. 12. (*Epistle.*)

It is not so much the greatness of the work, nor the belief of witnesses, nor the quality nor manner of the action, nor truth of essence, that can descry the immediate hand which worketh in our miracles. That alone is the true and golden rule, which Justin Martyr, if at least that book be his, prescribes in his "Questions and Answers:" "How shall it be known, that our miracles are better than the heathens', although the event countenance both alike?"—*Ans.* "By the faith and worship of the true God." Miracles must be judged by the doctrine which they confirm; not the doctrine by the miracles. The dreamer or prophet must be esteemed, not by the event of his wonder, but by the substance and scope of his teaching.—*Epistle vi. Decade i.*

Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones

judging the twelve tribes of Israel.—*St. Luke xxii. 28—30. (Gospel.)*

How far off is yonder great mountain ! my very eye is weary with the foresight of so great a distance ; yet time and patience shall overcome it : this night we shall hope to lodge beyond it. Some things are more tedious in their expectation than in their performance. The comfort is, that every step I take sets me nearer to my end : when I once come there, I shall both forget how long it now seems, and please myself to look back upon the way that I have measured.

It is thus in our passage to heaven. My weak nature is ready to faint, under the very conceit of the length and difficulty of this journey : my eye doth not more guide than discourage me. Many steps of grace and true obedience shall bring me insensibly thither. Only, let me move and hope ; and God's good leisure shall perfect my salvation.

O Lord, give me to possess my soul with patience ; and not so much to regard speed as certainty. When I come to the top of thy holy hill, all these weary paces and deep sloughs shall either be forgotten, or contribute to my happiness in their remembrance.—*Occasional Meditations, xvii.*

St. Matthew the Apostle.

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.—2 Cor. iv. 1. (*Epistle.*)

ENTER not into so great a service without much foresight : when your hand is at the plough, it is too late to look back. Bethink yourself seriously of the weight of this charge ; and let your holy desire be allayed with some trembling.

It is a foolish rashness of young heads, when they are in God's chair, to wonder how they came thither ; and to forget the awfulness of that place, in the confidence of their own strength,—which is ever so much less as it is more esteemed.

I commend not the wayward excuses of Moses, nor the peremptory unwillingness of Ammonias and friar Thomas, who maimed themselves that they might be wilfully incapable. Betwixt both these there is an humble modesty and religious fearfulness, easily to be noted in those whom the Church honours with the name of her Fathers, worthy your imitation ; wherein yet you shall need no precedents, if you well consider what worth of parts, what strictness of carriage, what weight of offices, God expects in this vocation.—*Epistle v. Decade iv.*

And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.—St. Matthew ix. 9. (*Gospel.*)

WE are all naturally averse from thee, O God: do thou but bid us, Follow *thee*! Draw us by thy powerful word, and we shall run after thee. Alas! thou speakest, and we sit still: thou speakest by thine outward word to our ear, and we stir not. Speak thou by the secret and effectual word of thy Spirit to our heart; the world cannot hold us down; Satan cannot stop our way; we shall arise and follow thee.

It was not a more busy than gainful trade, that Matthew abandoned to follow Christ into poverty; and now he cast away his counters, and struck his tallies, and crossed his books, and contemned his heaps of cash in comparison of that better treasure, which he foresaw lie open in that happy attendance. If any commodity be valued of us too dear to be parted with for Christ, we are more fit to be publicans than disciples.—*Contemplations upon the New Testament, Book iii. Con. 4.*

St. Michael and all Angels.

There was war in heaven : Michael and his angels fought against the dragon ; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not ; neither was their place found any more in heaven.—Rev. xii. 7, 8. (*Epistle.*)

THERE is no man, no place, free from spirits ; although they testify their presence by visible effects but in few. Every man is a host to entertain angels, though not in visible shapes, as Abraham, and Lot. The evil ones do nothing but provoke us to sin, and plot mischiefs against us, by casting into our way dangerous objects ; by suggesting sinful motions to our minds ; by stirring up enemies against us amongst men ; by frightening us with terrors in ourselves, by accusing us to God :—on the contrary, the good angels are ever removing our hindrances from good, and our occasions of evil ; mitigating our temptations ; helping us against our enemies ; delivering us from dangers ; comforting us in sorrows ; furthering our good purposes ; and, at last, carrying up our souls to heaven. It would affright a weak Christian, that knows the power and malice of wicked spirits, to consider their presence and

number ; but when, with the eyes of Elisha's servant, he sees those on his side at present, as diligent and more powerful, he cannot but take heart again : especially if he consider, that neither of them is without God ; limiting the one, the bounds of their temptation ; directing the other, in the safeguard of his children. Whereupon it is come to pass that, though there be many legions of devils, and every one more strong than many legions of men, and more malicious than strong, yet the little flock of God's church liveth and prospereth. I have ever with me invisible friends and enemies. The consideration of mine enemies shall keep me from security ; and make me fearful of doing ought to advantage them. The consideration of my spiritual friends shall comfort me against the terror of the other ; shall remedy my solitariness ; shall make me wary of doing ought indecently : grieving me rather, that I have ever heretofore made them turn away their eyes, for shame of that, whereof I have not been ashamed ; that I have no more enjoyed their society ; that I have been no more affected with their presence. What though I see them not ? I believe them. I were no Christian, if my faith were not as sure as my sense.— *Meditations and Vows*, xcvi. Cent. 3.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.—
St. Matthew xviii. 10. (*Gospel.*)

WHAT should dust and ashes talk of comparing with spiritual and heavenly powers? Yet I am sure the Son of Man is above you. In Him will I glory. In itself your nature is so much above ours, as it is more spiritual, and nearer to your infinite creator: but if the Son of God hath advanced our nature above yours in uniting it to the Deity, we cannot so much praise his mercy, as you do for us. Yea, O ye blessed angels, whose greatness though we must not adore yet we cannot but awfully acknowledge with due veneration, I may boldly say ye hold it in no scorn to be “serviceable spirits” to the behoof of us weak and sinful men¹. Ye behold the face of our heavenly Father for us¹. Ye bear us up in your hands, that we dash not our feet against the stones of offence². Ye pitch your tents above us for our defence³. Ye rejoice in heaven at our conversion⁴. Ye carry up our parting souls into the bosom of Abraham⁵. As this is a wonderful joy

¹ See Heb. i. 14.

² See Ps. xci. 12.

⁴ See Luke xv. 10.

¹ See Mat. xviii. 10.

³ See Ps. xxxiv. 7.

⁵ See Luke xvi. 22.

and honour to us ; so can it be no derogation from your celestial glory and magnificence : since He whom ye profess to serve with us, professes that He, the Son of Man, came not to be served, but to serve. Oh now what can we want, when we have such purveyors ? What can we fear, while we have such guardians ? While we have such conveyance, what can let us from ascending into our heaven ?—*Sermon xxix.*

St. Luke the Evangelist.

I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.—2 Tim. iv. 6—8. (*Epistle.*)

HE that is the lord of life, and tried what it was to die, hath proclaimed them blessed that die in the Lord. Those are blessed, I know, that live in Him ; but they rest not from their labours : toil and sorrow are between them and a perfect enjoying of that blessedness, which they now pos-

sess only in hope and inchoation; when death hath added rest, their happiness is finished.

O death, how sweet is that rest, wherewith thou refreshest the weary pilgrims of this vale of mortality! How pleasant is thy face to those eyes, that have acquainted themselves with the sight of it, which to strangers is grim and ghastly! How worthy art thou to be welcome, unto those, that know whence thou art, and whither thou tendest! Who, that knows thee, can fear thee? Who that is not all nature, would rather hide himself amongst the baggage of this vile life, than follow thee to a crown? What indifferent judge, that should see life painted over with vain semblances of pleasures, attended with troops of sorrows on the one side, and on the other with uncertainty of continuance and certainty of dissolution; and then should turn his eyes unto death, and see her black, but comely, attended on the one hand with a momentary pain, with eternity of glory on the other; would not say, out of choice, that which the prophet said out of passion, *It is better for me to die than to live*⁶?

But alas, O my God, nature is strong and

⁶ Jonah iv. 8.

weak in me at once ! I cannot wish to welcome death, as it is worthy : when I look for most courage, I find strongest temptations : I see and confess, that when I am myself, thou hast no such coward as I. Let me alone, and I shall shame that name of thine which I have professed : every secure worldling shall laugh at my feebleness. O God, were thy martyrs thus haled to their stakes ? might they not have been loosed from their racks, and choose to die in those torments ? Let it be no shame, for thy servant to take up that complaint, which thou madest of thy better attendants : *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak* ⁷.

O thou God of Spirits, thou hast coupled these two together, unite them in a desire of their dissolution : weaken this flesh to receive, and encourage this spirit either to desire or to contemn death : and now, as I grow nearer to my home, let me increase in the sense of my joys. I am thine, save me, O Lord. It was thou that didst put such courage into thine ancient and late witnesses, that they either invited or challenged death ; and held their persecutors their best friends, for letting them loose from these gieves

⁷ Mat. xxvi. 41.

of flesh. I know, thy hand is not shortened ; neither any of them hath received more proofs of thy former mercies. Oh, let thy goodness enable me to reach them, in the comfortable steadiness of my passage ! Do but draw this veil a little, that I may see my glory ; and I cannot but be enflamed with a desire of it. It was not I, that either made this body for the earth, or this soul for my body, or this heaven for my soul, or this glory of heaven, or this entrance into glory : all is thine own work. Oh, perfect what thou hast begun ! that thy praise and my happiness may be consummate at once.

Yea, O my soul, what needest thou wish the God of mercies to be tender of his own honour ? Art thou not a member of that body, whereof thy Saviour is the head ? Canst thou drown, when thy head is above ? Was it not for thee, that He triumphed over death ? Is there any fear in a foiled adversary ? O my Redeemer, I have already overcome in thee ! how can I miscarry in myself ? O my soul, thou hast marched valiantly ! Behold the damsels of that heavenly Jerusalem, come forth with timbrels and harps to meet thee, and to applaud thy success : and now, there remains nothing for thee, but *a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge,*

shall give thee at that day. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?—A Meditation of Death.

The Lord appointed others seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. — St. Luke x. 1. (*Gospel.*)

God who is simply one, infinitely perfect, absolutely complete in Himself, enjoys Himself fully, from all eternity, without any relation to the creature: but, knowing our wants and weaknesses, He hath ordained a society for our well-being: and therefore, even in man's innocency, could say, *It is not good that the man should be alone*⁹. And why, Lord? why might not man have taken pleasure enough in the beauty and sweetness of his paradise; in contemplating thy heaven; in the command of thine obsequious creatures; and, above all, in the fruition of thy divine presence, in that happy integrity of his nature, without any accession of other helps? Surely, thou, who knowest well what disposition thou hadst put into him, intendedst to fit him with all meet conveniences: and thou, who madest him sociable, before he could have any society, thoughtest fit to

⁸ 1 Cor. xv. 55.

⁹ Gen. ii. 18.

stead him with such a society, as might make his life comfortable to him. Wise Solomon observes it out of his deep experience, for a *vanity under the sun*, that *there is one alone, and there is not a second*; and that, *two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour*¹. In the plantation of the Evangelical Church, the Apostles are not reckoned single, but by pairs², and so doth their Lord send them upon the great errand of his Gospel: and, when He seconded that work, by a commission given to his Seventy Disciples, He *sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come*. After this, when our Saviour had left the earth, Paul and Barnabas go together; and, when they are parted, Paul and Silas, Barnabas and Mark are sorted. Single endeavours seldom prosper: many hands make the work both quick and sure. They can be no friends to the happy estate of a family or church, that labour to cause distractions: division makes certain way for ruin.—*Select Thoughts*, lxxii.

¹ Eccl. iv. 7—9.

² Mat. x. 2—4.

St. Simon and St. Jude, Apostles.

Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called : Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.—St. Jude 1, 2. (*Epistle.*)

My son, if ever thou look for sound comfort on earth, and salvation in heaven, unglue thyself from the world and the vanities of it : put thyself upon thy Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ : leave not, till thou findest thyself firmly united to Him ; so as thou art become a limb of that body whereof He is head, a spouse of that husband, a branch of that stem, a stone laid upon that foundation. Look not therefore for any blessing out of Him ; and in, and by, and from Him, look for all blessings. Let Him be thy life ; and wish not to live longer than thou art quickened by Him. Find Him thy Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, Redemption³ ; thy Riches, thy Strength, thy Glory.

Apply unto thyself all that thy Saviour is or

³ 1 Cor. i. 30.

hath done. Wouldst thou have the graces of God's Spirit? fetch them from his anointing. Wouldst thou have power against spiritual enemies? fetch it from his sovereignty. Wouldst thou have redemption? fetch it from his passion. Wouldst thou have absolution? fetch it from his perfect innocence: freedom from the curse? fetch it from his cross: satisfaction? fetch it from his sacrifice: cleansing from sin? fetch it from his blood: mortification? fetch it from his grave: newness of life? fetch it from his resurrection: right to heaven? fetch it from his purchase: audience in all thy suits? fetch it from his intercession. Wouldst thou have salvation? fetch it from his session at the right hand of Majesty. Wouldst thou have all? fetch it from Him who is *one Lord, . . . one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all*⁴.

And, as thy faith shall then interest thee in Christ, thy head; so let thy charity unite thee to his body, the church, both in earth and heaven. Hold ever an inviolable communion with that holy and blessed fraternity. Sever not thyself from it, either in judgment or affection. Make account there is not one of God's saints upon

⁴ Eph. iv. 5, 6.

earth but hath a propriety in thee; and thou mayest challenge the same in each of them: so as thou canst not but be sensible of their passions: and be freely communicative of all thy graces and all serviceable offices, by example, admonition, exhortation, consolation, prayer, beneficence, for the good of that sacred community.

And, when thou raisest up thine eyes to heaven, think of that glorious society of blessed saints who are gone before thee; and are now there triumphing and reigning, in eternal and incomprehensible glory. Bless God for them, and wish thyself with them. Tread in their holy steps, and be ambitious of that crown of glory and immortality which thou seest shining on their heads — *Christ Mystical, Chap. viii.*

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.—St. John xv. 18, 19. (*Gospel.*)

THERE is a mutual hatred betwixt a Christian and the world: for, on the one side, the love of the world is enmity with God, and God's children cannot but take their Father's part: on the other, *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me*

before it hated you. But the hatred of the good man to the wicked is not so extreme as that wherewith he is hated: for the Christian hates ever with commiseration and love of that good he sees in the worst: knowing that the essence of the very devils is good; and that the lewdest man hath some excellent parts of nature, or common graces of the Spirit of God, which he warily singleth out in his affection: but the wicked man hates him for goodness; and, therefore, finds nothing in himself to moderate his detestation. There can be no better music in mine ear than the discord of the wicked. If he like me, I am afraid he spies some quality in me, like to his own. If he saw nothing but goodness, he could not love me, and be bad himself. It was a just doubt of Phocion, who, when the people praised him, asked, "What evil have I done?" I will strive to deserve evil of none; but, not deserving ill, it shall not grieve me to hear ill of those that are evil. I know no greater argument of goodness, than the hatred of a wicked man.—*Meditations and Vows*, lxxv. Cent. 3.

All Saints' Day.

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.—Rev. vii. 9, 10. (*Epistle.*)

O MY soul, having left below thee all the trivial vanities of earth; and fixed thyself, so far as thy weak eyes will allow thee, upon thy God and Saviour, in his almighty works and most glorious attributes; it will be time for thee, and will not a little conduce to thy further address towards blessedness, to fasten thyself upon the sight of the happy estate of the saints above, who are gone before thee to their bliss, and have, through God's mercy, comfortably attained that which thou aspirest unto. Thou, that wert guided by their example, be likewise heartened by their success; thou art yet a traveller; they, comprehensors: thou art panting towards that rest, which they most happily enjoy; thou art sweat-

ing under the cross, while they sit crowned in a heavenly magnificence.

See the place wherein they are, the heaven of heavens, the paradise of God; infinitely resplendent, infinitely delectable; such as no eye can behold and not be blessed. Shouldst thou set thy tabernacle in the midst of the sun, thou couldst not but be encompassed with marvellous light; yet, even then, it would be but as midnight with thee in comparison of those irradiations of glory, which shine forth above in that Imperial Region; for thy God is the sun there⁵: by how much, therefore, those divine rays of his exceed the brightest beams of his creature; so much doth the beauty of that heaven of the blessed surpass the created light of this inferior and starry firmament. How canst thou, then, O my soul, be but wholly taken up with the sight of that celestial Jerusalem, the beauteous city of thy God, the blessed mansions of glorified spirits! Surely if earth could have yielded any thing more fair and estimable than gold, pearls, precious stones, it should have been borrowed to resemble these supernal habitations; but, alas, the lustre of these base materials doth but darken the resplendence

⁵ See Rev. xxi. 23.

of those divine excellencies. With what contempt now dost thou look down upon those muddy foundations of earth, which the low spirits of worldlings are wont to admire ! and how feelingly dost thou bless and emulate the spirits of just men made perfect, who are honoured with so blissful a habitation⁶ !

But what were the place, O my soul, how goodly and glorious soever in itself, if it were not for the presence of Him, whose being there makes it heaven ? Lo, there, the throne of that heavenly majesty which, filling and comprehending the large circumference of this whole, both lower and superior world, yet there keeps and manifests his state with the infinite magnificence of the King of Eternal Glory. There He, in an ineffable manner, communicates Himself to blessed spirits, both angels and men ; and that very vision is no less to them than beatifical. Surely, were the place a thousand degrees lower in beauty and perfection than it is, yet that presence would render it celestial : the residence of the king was wont to turn the meanest village or castle into a court. The sweet singer of Israel saw this of old, and could say, *In thy presence is fulness of*

⁶ See Heb. xii. 23.

joy ; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore⁷. It is not so in these earthly and finite excellencies. A man may see mountains of treasure, and be never a whit the richer ; and may be the witness and agent too in another's honour, as Haman was of Mordecai's, and be so much more miserable ; or may view the pomp and splendour of mighty princes, and be yet still a beggar : but the infinite graces of that Heavenly King are so communicative, that no man can see Him, but must be transformed into the likeness of his glory.—*The Soul's Farewell to Earth*, § 7.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven : for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.—St. Matthew v. 11, 12. (*Gospel.*)

As there is a perfect union betwixt the glorious saints in heaven, and an union, though imperfect, betwixt the saints on earth ; so there is an union, partly perfect and partly imperfect, between the saints in heaven and the saints below upon earth :

⁷ Ps. xvi. 11.

perfect in respect of those glorified saints above ; imperfect in respect of the weak returns we are able to make to them again.

Let no man think that, because those blessed souls are out of sight, far distant in another world, and we are here toiling in a vale of tears, we have therefore lost all mutual regard to each other ; no, there is still, and ever will be, a secret but unfailing correspondence between heaven and earth. The present happiness of those heavenly citizens cannot have abated ought of their knowledge and charity ; but must needs have raised them to a higher pitch of both. They, therefore, who are now glorious comprehensors cannot but, in a generality, retain the notice of the sad condition of us poor travellers here below, panting towards our rest, together with them ; and, in common, wish for the happy consummation of this our weary pilgrimage, in the fruition of their glory. That they have any perspective, whereby they can see down into our particular wants, is that which we find no ground to believe : it is enough that they have an universal apprehension of the estate of Christ's warfaring church upon the face of the earth^a ; and fellow members of the

^a See Rev. vi. 10.

same mystical body long for a perfect glorification of the whole.

As for us wretched pilgrims, that are yet left here below to tug with many difficulties, we cannot forget that better half of us that is now triumphant in glory. O ye blessed saints above, we honour your memories so far as we ought; we do with praise recount your virtues; we magnify your victories; we bless God for your happy exemption from the misery of this world, and for your estating in that blessed immortality; we imitate your holy examples; we long and pray for a happy consociation with you. We dare not raise temples, dedicate altars, direct prayers to you; we dare not, finally, offer any thing to you which you are unwilling to receive; nor put any thing upon you which you would disclaim as prejudicial to your Creator and Redeemer. It is abundant comfort to us that some part of us is in the fruition of that glory, whereto we, the other poor labouring part, desire and strive to aspire; that our head and shoulders are above water, while the other limbs are yet wading through the stream.—*Christ Mystical, Chap. vii. § 3.*

